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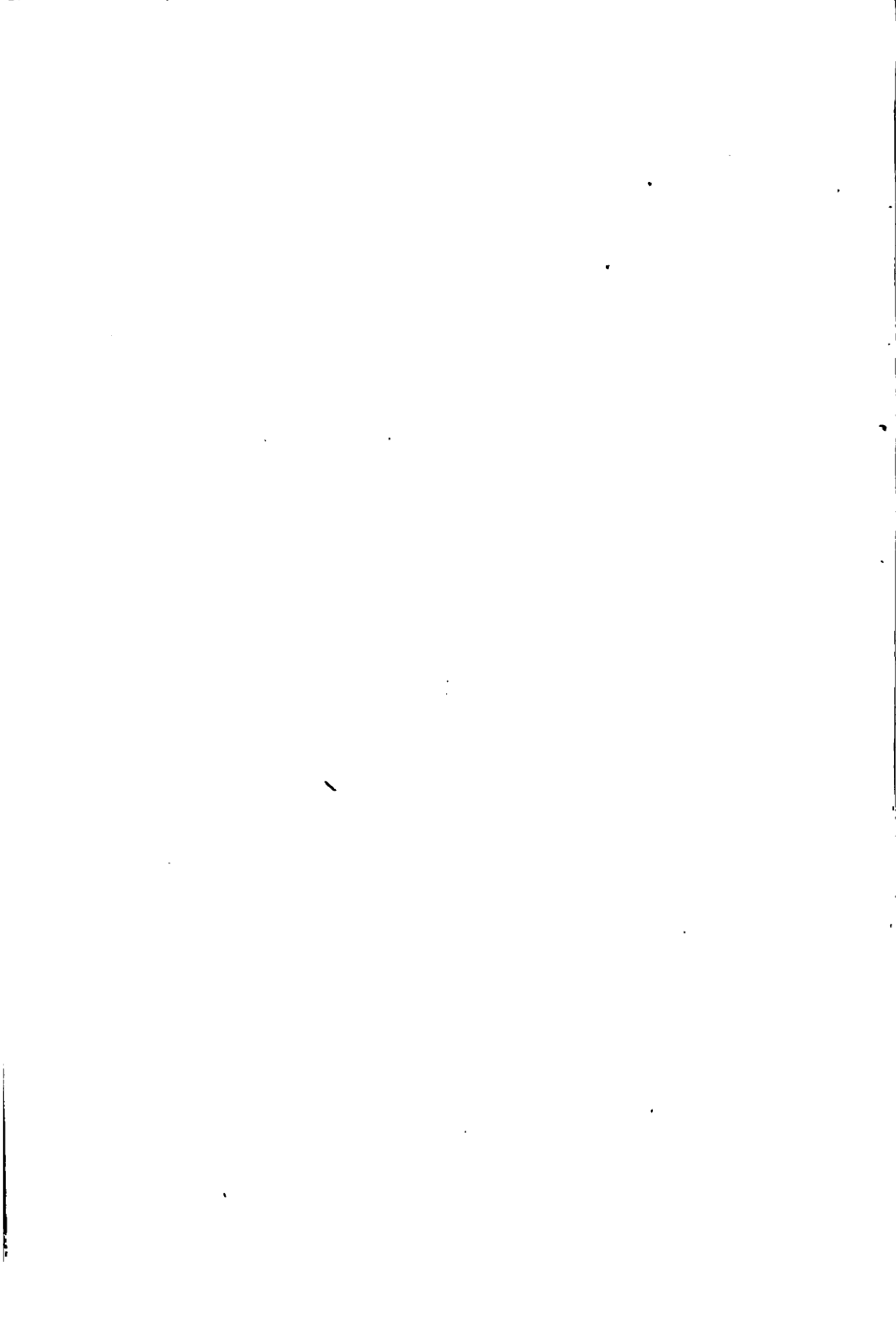
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**PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT
QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY**



Anal.

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PRESENT-DAY PAPERS

On Prominent Questions in Theology

EDITED BY

THE RIGHT REV. ALEXANDER EWING, D.C.L.

BISHOP OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES

SECOND SERIES



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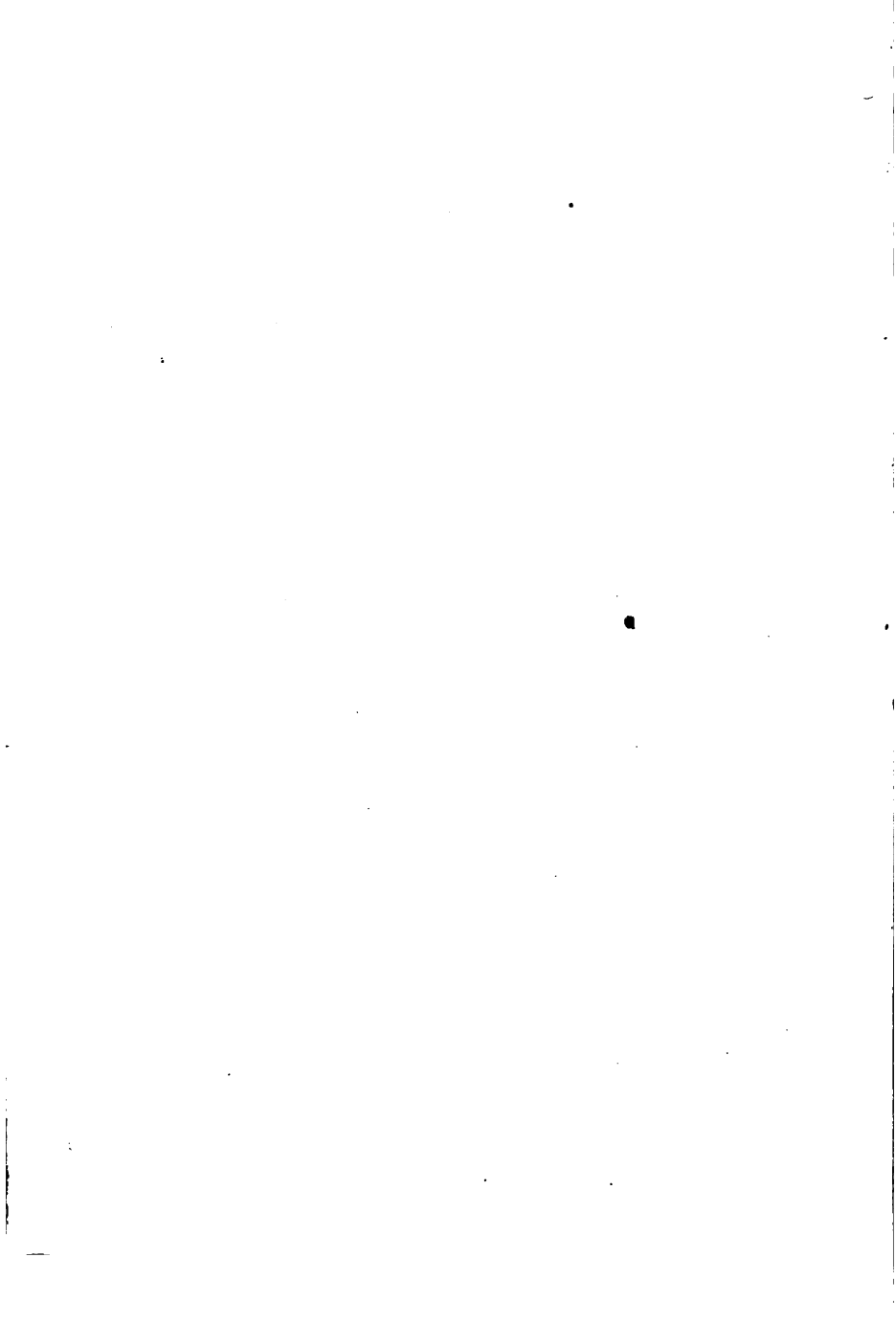
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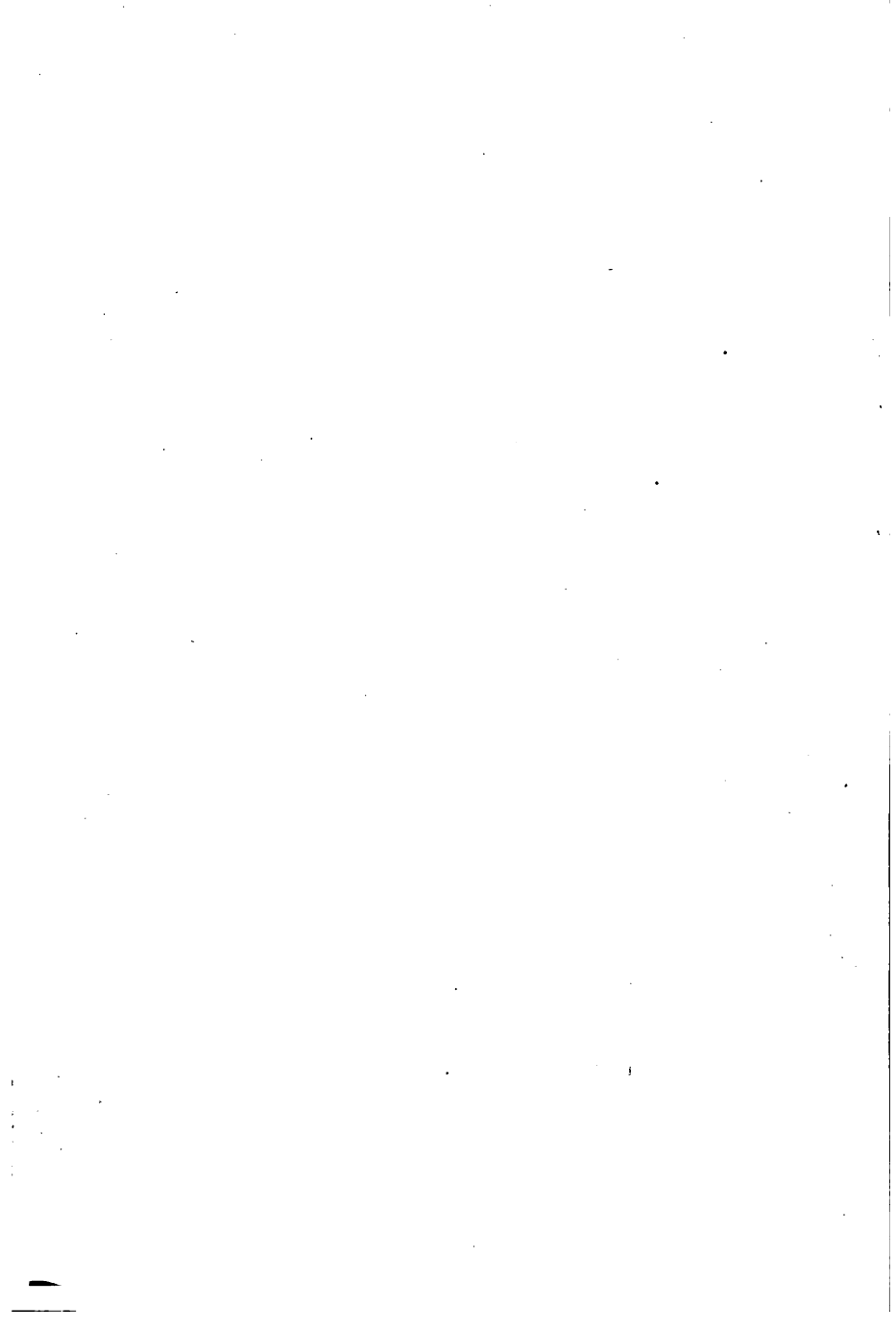
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*PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS
IN THEOLOGY*

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

By Henry Place.

“ *The Lord is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works.*”—PS. CXLV. 9.

“ *Deus autem proposuit habere filios impavidos, securos, generosos, æternaliter et perfecte, qui prorsus nihil timeant, sed per gratiæ suæ fiduciam omnia triumphant atque contemnant, pœnasque et mortes pro ludibrio habeant; ceteros ignavos odit, qui omnium timore confunduntur, etiam a sonitu folii volantis.*”—LUTHER, *Resol. Disp. de Indulg.*

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

THIS is one of a series of papers on prominent questions in theology. Perhaps the subject of this Essay may not be at once recognized as coming under that description. Yet, if it be the article of a standing or a falling Church, it must be really prominent at all times. It is certain that the Reformation, to which all modern life and thought is due, took its origin from the preaching of justification by Faith in Christ, and it may be presumed, therefore, that the more we understand that doctrine, and realize its power, the better shall we understand and meet the needs of our time. It will appear, I hope, in the course of this paper, that the doctrine does, in fact, answer the deepest questions raised by the theological thought of the day. At all events, being urged to furnish a contribution to this series, and being reluctant to offer to public consideration any mere ideas of my own, it occurred to me that an attempt to interpret the exact meaning in which the doctrine was first proclaimed might at least offer valuable materials for reflection.

A great truth is always studied with advantage in the form

and in the circumstances in which it was first declared. We are better able to observe the wants which it supplies, and the principles to which it stands in closest relation. In its subsequent history, even if it be not obscured, it becomes confounded with a variety of secondary considerations, amidst which its true proportions are apt to be lost. Now, by common consent, the ninety-five propositions which Luther proposed for disputation on All Saints' Eve, 1517, laid the foundation of the reformed doctrine. He published, moreover, in the following year, a full explanation of these propositions; and in the course of that treatise his doctrine received the distinct development which it ever afterwards retained. It is unfortunate, perhaps, that a considerable portion of his discussion should, of necessity, be concerned with the technical doctrines and arguments of the scholastic theology of his day. Readers, it is to be feared, are thus deterred from doing justice to a treatise which cannot be thoroughly studied without moving the soul to its depths. The unfortunate misconceptions of the Lutheran doctrine which, by the agency of a powerful school of writers, have been widely spread within the last thirty years, could not have been put forward if these foundations of the Reformation had been duly understood. I must dismiss not only the technical portion of Luther's discussion, but many other parts, which, although of great interest, are not essential to my immediate purpose. My main object is to render it clear what Luther himself meant by his great doctrine, and I have extracted those passages, and only those,

which appeared essential to such an understanding. I feel unable to do any justice to the vigour of Luther's Latin, but in an essay intended for general reading it is probably better to offer a translation, however imperfect.

Two of the misconceptions to which I refer are that the Lutheran doctrine is connected with a low estimate of the necessity of penitence, and that it tends to depreciate the office and the ordinances of the Church. The fact is, that it sprung from a deep and almost agonising sense of the need of penitence, and that it grew into full distinctness under a desire to vindicate for the Christian ministry a real and operative power. The first and fundamental proposition of the famous disputation is the following :—

When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said, "Repent, &c.," he intended the whole life of Christians to be one long repentance.

This Luther proves by reference to the meaning of the word, implying a change of mind, and to the solemn calls addressed to Christians by our Lord and his Apostles that they should take up the cross and crucify the flesh. The penitence of the Gospel, he says, is a divine law, for ever immutable, being in fact the acceptable sacrifice of a contrite and humble heart. In its essence it is spiritual, but it can not be real without producing external acts of self-denial. In point of fact, that which horrified Luther in the sale of indulgences was the preaching that Christians could buy off the punishments which would otherwise attend their penitence and their forgiveness. He not only revolted

from this cowardly teaching with all the indignation of a manly soul, but he felt its utter incompatibility with those eternal laws of the spirit which Christ had proclaimed. So long as the soul has to struggle with sin, so long must it suffer and "die daily." "The cross of penitence must remain until according to the Apostle, the old man be destroyed, until the old Adam perish with his image, and the new Adam be renewed in the image of God." If sin remain until death, so must, in due degree, its penalty, and the Christian must continue to hate himself until his final entrance into the kingdom of heaven. The soul is in the hand of God. It is the dawning vision of Him which prompts its struggles towards Him, and He alone can lead it through the valley of the shadow of death, and through the hours of pain and gloom akin to death. If it were possible to relieve a true soul of this necessity, it would spurn the relief. It would not willingly lose one moment of the discipline which the God of its life ordains for it. But how can the Pope or any other priest have the power of altering at will the essential relations between the soul and God? The Pope, Luther concludes, cannot remit any punishments, except those imposed by himself or by ecclesiastical discipline. The last eternal doom is, of course, out of his power. The voluntary and evangelical punishment inherent in true repentance, and God's chastening of those whom He loves, are equally beyond his control. What punishment remains, except that of mere ecclesiastical discipline? It had been suggested, indeed, by Luther's opponents that there

was a certain degree of punishment required simply for the satisfaction of divine justice, which might be remitted by priestly authority. Luther answers, in the first place, that, if it be thus required, it is impious to suppose divine justice can be modified or relaxed by the Pope. But in truth he indignantly denies the existence of any such demand for satisfaction on the part of God. The only satisfaction God requires is a new life. "Moreover," he exclaims, "I wonder whether in such language they mean to make God into a usurer or a merchant, who cannot forgive freely unless satisfaction be given Him as a kind of price? Or is it their meaning that we should treat about our sins with God's justice, before which no flesh is justified?"

No human authority, therefore, can alter by one jot or tittle the operation of the divine law, nor relieve the soul of one single penitential pang.

So far as regarded punishment, therefore, the truth was plain. There remained, however, the remission of personal guilt, or of forgiveness—a totally distinct question of course, from that of remission of punishment. A father may heartily forgive a son whom he nevertheless thinks it necessary to subject to a salutary discipline. I shall have to revert to this distinction in the sequel. For the present it is enough to observe that on this point Luther is equally conscious of the impossibility of any human judgment modifying the judgment of God, or of any act of one man altering God's will and disposition towards another. The Pope, he declares summarily in his sixth proposition, cannot

remit any guilt except by declaring and approving its remission by God.

It is remarkable that in his explanation he says: "This conclusion all concede to be true, so that it needs no confirmation on my part." But then arose the question, what is left for the office of the priest, and of the Pope, the chief of priests? What is the meaning of the Christian ministry, and of those acts of Absolution which from the earliest times have been essentially associated with it? What is the meaning of our Lord's solemn words, "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained;" and again, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose in earth shall be loosed in heaven?" Whatever the true sense of those words, they must mean something; and, at all events, no doctrine can be true which evacuates them of all effectual meaning. It is in the answer to this question, and in the explanation of this text, that the doctrine of justification by faith takes its definite form.

When Luther first published his theses, he was disposed, as we have seen, to answer the question by saying that the Pope remits guilt in the sense of declaring and approving its remission by God. "The remission of sin, and the participation of Christ's benefits granted by the Pope is in no way to be despised, because, as I have said, it is a declaration of the divine remission." But before he wrote the explanation of his propositions, he felt the inadequacy of this interpretation. "I am not satisfied," he says, "with this mode of speech,

that the Pope does nothing more than declare or approve the divine remission. For in the first place, it renders the power of the Keys of too little value ; nay, in some measure it makes the words of Christ void where he said 'Whatsoever,' &c. For a pure declaration is too slight a thing to correspond to them. In the second place, it leaves everything uncertain to the person to whom the declaration is made, however certain his remission and reconciliation may be to others, and publicly in the face of the Church." Besides, "the text does not say 'whatsoever I shall loose in heaven thou shalt loose on earth,' but the contrary : 'Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth I will loose, or it shall be loosed in heaven.' Where God seems rather to approve the loosing of the priest than the opposite." In short, the text and other passages seem to signify that remission on earth precedes remission in heaven. But still this fundamental question confronted him, "How could these things come to pass before the infusion of grace (that is before the remission of God) ? Since, unless the grace of God first remitted guilt, a man could not even have the desire of seeking remission." In the solution of this difficulty I have the pleasure of remitting the reader to Luther's own words, so far, at least, as I have been able to translate them. The two following passages contain the cardinal statements of the Reformer's great doctrine, and cannot be too attentively considered.

"When God begins to justify a man, He first damns him ; whom He would build up, He destroys ; whom He would heal, He smites ; whom He would quicken, He kills.

As, in 1 Sam. ii., and Deut. xxxii., he says, 'I kill and make alive.' But this He does when He crushes a man, and humbles him, and makes him tremble at the knowledge of himself and of his sins; so that the miserable sinner exclaims—'There is no health in my flesh, because of thy displeasure; neither is there any rest in my bones, by reason of my sin.' For thus the mountains flow before the face of the Lord, thus He sends forth His arrows and scatters them: 'from thy chiding, O Lord, from the blasting of the breath of thy displeasure.' Thus sinners are turned into hell, and their faces are filled with confusion. This confusion and shaking David often experienced, and confesses it, with many groans, in various psalms.

"But in this confusion begins salvation, because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. As Nahum saith: 'The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. His lightnings gleam: the earth beholds, and quakes. His arrows go abroad; the voice of His thunder is heard round about; the waters see it, and are afraid.' Here, in short, God works a work foreign to His nature, in order that He may work His own work. This is the true contrition of heart, and that humiliation of spirit which is the most acceptable sacrifice to God. And here, as they express it, is grace infused, as Isaiah says: 'He shall pursue them, and shall pass in peace.' And Obadiah: 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.'

“But at this moment a man is so ignorant of his own justification, that he thinks himself on the verge of damnation. Nor does he think this an infusion of grace, but an effusion of the wrath of God upon him. But happy is he, if he endures this temptation ; for, when he thinks himself consumed, he shall rise like the day-star.

“But in this miserable confusion of his conscience, he has no peace nor consolation, unless he flee to the power of the Church, and opening his sins and miseries by confession, demand comfort and ghostly medicine. For, by his own counsel or help he would never be able to gain peace for himself ; he would rather, by his sorrow, be swallowed up in despair. Here the priest, beholding such humility and compunction, ought, in reliance on the power of doing mercy bestowed on him, most fully to presume to loose the sinner, and to declare him loosed, and thus give him peace of conscience.

“But let him who is absolved beware, with all earnestness, lest he doubt that his sins are forgiven him by God, and let him be at peace in his heart ; for although, in the confusion of his conscience, he be uncertain (as must ordinarily happen if his compunction be true), nevertheless he is bound to abide by the judgment of another—by no means on account of the priest himself or of his power, but on account of the word of Christ, which cannot lie, saying, ‘Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth.’ For faith in His word will create peace of conscience, while the priest looses in pursuance of it. But if a man seeks peace by any other

way—as, for instance, by inward experience—he certainly seems to tempt God, and to desire to possess peace in fact, not in faith. Your peace will be great in proportion to your faith in the word of promise: ‘Whatsoever thou shalt loose,’ &c. For Christ is our peace; but in faith. But if a man does not believe His word, he will never have peace, though he were absolved a thousand times by the Pope himself, and though he confessed to all the world.

“This, accordingly, is that most sweet power for which, from the bottom of our hearts, we ought to render the highest thanks to God, ‘who hath given such power unto men.’ It is the one great consolation of sinners and of unhappy consciences, if they do but believe that Christ’s promise is true.

“The question before suggested is thus made plain—namely, that although guilt be remitted by infusion of grace before the remission of the priest, nevertheless, the infusion of grace is such, and so hidden under the form of wrath (as the psalm says, that ‘His footsteps are not known’), that a man is more uncertain of grace when it is present, than when it is absent. Therefore, in the ordinary course, we can have no certain remission of guilt except by the judgment of the priest; nor by him, unless we believe Christ’s promise: ‘Whatsoever thou shalt loose,’ &c. For while it is uncertain to us, it is not really remission; since it is no remission to us. Nay, a man would perish the more miserably, unless the remission were assured to him; for he would not believe that it was granted to himself.

“So Christ said of Mary Magdalene to Simon the leper : ‘Her sins are forgiven ;’ by which He evidently signified that grace was already infused into her. But this infusion she did not herself recognize. There was as yet no peace in her bones by reason of her sin, until He turned and said to her : ‘Thy sins are forgiven thee ; thy faith hath saved thee’—namely, because she believed Him who forgave them. Therefore follows : ‘Go in peace.’

“So the sins of the adulteress were already forgiven her before Christ lifted up Himself. But she could not recognize it, while she saw so many accusers standing around her, until she heard the voice of the Bridegroom, saying, ‘Woman, hath no man condemned thee? neither do I condemn thee.’

“And David, no doubt, after he had sinned, and had been rebuked at God’s command by the prophet Nathan, would have suddenly died when, by the grace of justification working in him, he exclaimed : ‘I have sinned’ (for this is the voice of the just, first of all accusing themselves), unless Nathan had immediately spoken in absolution : ‘The Lord also hath put away thy sin : thou shalt not die.’ For why did he add : ‘Thou shalt not die,’ but because he saw him shattered and fainting at the terror of his sin? . . .

“And throughout the Old Testament, how could confidence in the mercy of God and the remission of sins have been maintained, unless God, now by visions, now by inspirations, now by burning of oblations, now by the appearance of the cloud, and by other signs, had shown that

He accepted whatever they wrought? This is what He now will have done by the word and by the judgment of the priest.

“It is, therefore, God’s remission which works grace, but the remission of the priest which works peace ; and this is itself the grace and the gift of God, because it is the assurance of remission and of present grace. And, in my meaning, this is what I should call the grace which our doctors say is effectually conferred by the sacraments of the Church. Not the original justifying grace, which in adults ought to be present before the sacrament ; but, as is said in Romans i. : ‘ From faith to faith ;’ for he who cometh must believe. But the baptized person ought also to believe that he rightly believed and approached the sacrament, or he will never have peace, which can never be had but by faith. Peter, therefore, does not loose before Christ, but he declares the loosing and makes it manifest ; and if a man believe this with confidence, he has truly obtained peace and remission with God (that is, he is rendered certain that he is absolved), by the certainty, not of fact but of faith ; according to the infallible word of Him who mercifully promises : ‘ Whatsoever thou shalt loose,’ &c. So, Rom. v. : ‘ Being justified freely by His grace, we have peace with God by faith,’—not, therefore, by the fact.

“If these conceptions be correct and true, it is not false, nor (as is urged) an improper mode of speech, to say that the Pope remits guilt. Nay, the remission of guilt is incomparably better than the remission of any punishments whatever. Men have preached the latter so exclusively that

they have rendered the remission of guilt absolutely null in the Church ; whereas it is this, on the contrary, which is far the superior of the two. For when, by the remission of guilt (which no one can give to himself, since no one should believe himself, unless he desires out of one confusion to make two)—when, I say, a man has accepted the remission of guilt through the faith of absolution, and is at peace, all punishment is from thenceforward no punishment at all to him. It is confusion of conscience which renders punishment hard to bear, whereas joy of conscience makes punishment welcome.

“And we see this understanding of the power of the keys abounds among the common people, who seek and receive absolution in simple faith. But some of the more learned rely on making themselves at peace by their own contritions, and works, and confessions, and all they do is to go from unrest to unrest, because they trust in themselves, and in their own things ; whereas, if they really felt the evil of conscience, they should believe Christ, saying : ‘ Whatsoever thou shalt loose,’ &c.

“Recent divines are wondrously happy in dealing with this evil of conscience. They so handle and teach the sacrament of penance that the people learn to trust in their power of blotting out their sins by their own contritions and satisfactions. There can be only one effect of this empty presumption. Like the woman in the issue of blood, who had spent all her living on physicians, they rather grow worse.

“The first thing taught should be faith in Christ, the free bestower of remission, and men should be persuaded to

despair of their own contrition and satisfaction ; that thus, in confidence and joy of heart, strengthened by the mercy of Christ, they might at length learn with gladness to hate sin—might be rendered contrite, and make satisfaction.

“ The Canonists also are busy authors of this torture. By exalting the power of the Pope with excessive zeal, they have done more to increase the estimation and wonder with which the Pope’s power is regarded than to make Christ’s word honoured by faith. Whereas men should be taught to confide, not in the power of the Pope, but in the word of Christ’s promise to the Pope, if they desire to be at peace in their consciences. For it is not because the Pope grants that you possess anything, but you possess it if you believe you receive it. You have as much as you believe you have, on account of the promise of Christ.

“ Indeed, unless the power of the keys were thus effectual to peace of heart and remission of guilt, indulgences would then in reality (as some say) be depreciated. For where is the great boon if remission of punishment be bestowed, since it becomes Christians to despise even death itself?

“ Moreover, why did Christ say, ‘Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them,’ except because they are only remitted to those who, on the remission of the priest, believe them remitted ? So in the word : ‘Whose sins ye remit,’ power is bestowed ; but in the word : ‘They are remitted,’ the sinner is invited to believe the remission. As also in the word : ‘Whatsoever thou shalt loose,’ power is given ; in the word : ‘It shall be loosed,’ our faith is aroused. He could have said,

‘Whosoever punishments or vengeance ye remit,’ if he had meant us so to understand him; but he knew that a conscience already justified by grace would, in its terror, reject grace, unless it were aided by faith in the presence of grace through the ministry of the priest. In truth, sin would remain, unless the man believed it forgiven. Even the remission of sin and the bestowal of grace are not enough. It is necessary also to believe the remission. And this is the witness which the Spirit beareth with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Because to be the child of God is a thing so hidden (since man appears to himself to be the enemy of God), that unless it be believed to be so, it cannot be so. Thus it is the Lord magnifies his saints, because no one would endure the hand of the justifier and healer unless in the belief that he was justifying and healing. Just as a sick man does not believe that the doctor is handling his body with the aim of healing him, unless he be persuaded of it by his friends.

“Whether, therefore, the priest be the cause *sine quâ non*, or in whatever other sense he be the cause of remission of sins, is indifferent to me, so long as it remains true in some sense that the priest does remit sin and guilt. Just as the cure of a sick man is truly ascribed to his friends, if it was owing to their persuasions that he trusted himself to the knife of the physician.

“Nor ought the question to arise: What if the priest should err? for the remission rests, not on the priest, but on the word of Christ. Therefore, whether the priest act for

gain or for glory, provided only you simply and unfeignedly desire forgiveness and believe the promise of Christ, then, even though he might give absolution in sport, you would still obtain peace by your faith. Just as in the administration of baptism or the Eucharist, whether the priest seek his own gain, whether he act in levity or mockery, your faith receives the fulness of the sacrament ; so great a matter is the word of Christ, and faith in it.

“So St. Athanasius, when a boy, baptized boys, whom the Bishop of Alexandria afterwards adjudged to be truly baptized. And St. Cyprian, when a bishop had given absolution hastily, blamed the act indeed, but held it valid. It is by faith, therefore, that we are justified, and by faith that we have peace—not by works, nor by acts of repentance, nor by confessions.”

The above passages contain a statement of the doctrine with reference to the question of the remission of guilt. In the following passages Luther renews and amplifies the statement with reference to the participation by the Christian of the full benefits of Christ :—

“As I explained before concerning the remission of guilt, so, until I am better instructed, I am disposed to think here respecting the participation of benefits. The sinner after sin has the greatest difficulty in trusting the mercy of God, sin, with its intolerable burden, urging him to despair ; just as, before sin, it is much easier to conceive the mercy of God than his anger. For man acts always perversely, fearing where he ought not to fear but to hope, namely,

after sin ; and presuming where he ought not to presume but to fear, namely, before sin.

“ Of this an example is abundantly shown in the resurrection of Christ, when he had need of every proof to raise himself up again in the hearts of his disciples. The first announcement was feminine, and likened by the disciples to ravings. And so to the sinner the first confidence appears weak, and such as he cannot or can scarcely believe. Thus it is much more difficult to believe ourselves partakers of all Christ’s benefits—that is, of unspeakable benefits, or that, in St. Peter’s words, we are partakers of the divine nature. The very greatness of such benefits creates distrust—namely, that not only are such great evils remitted, but also such great benefits conferred, that a man becomes the child of God, the inheritor of the kingdom, the brother of Christ, the companion of the angels, the lord of the world. How, I ask, can a man believe these things to be true, who, wearied with the sting and the burden of his sins, is being dragged to hell ?

“ Here, accordingly, the judgment of the keys is necessary—that a man should not believe himself, but rather believe the keys, that is, the priest. And I care not whether the priest be, by chance, unlearned or thoughtless. For the dependence is not on the priest, nor on his power, but on the word of Him who spoke, and who lies not : ‘ Whatsoever thou shalt loose,’ &c. In those who believe on that word the power of the keys cannot err. It errs in those alone who do not believe the absolution to be valid. For suppose

(to put an impossible or accidental case) that a man is not sufficiently contrite, or does not think himself so, but nevertheless with all his heart believes the assurance of the absolver that he is absolved, this very faith (I venture to think) renders him most truly absolved, because he believes in Him who said, 'Whatsoever,' &c. For faith in Christ always justifies, just as if you were baptized by a foolish, mocking, or unlearned priest.

"Moreover, even if you do not think yourself sufficiently contrite (for you neither can nor ought to trust yourself), yet if you believe Him who said, 'Whosoever believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved,' I tell you that this faith in His word renders you most truly baptized, however your contrition may be. Everywhere, therefore, the great necessity is of faith. And thus I understand what our doctors say—that the sacraments are effectual signs of grace, not (according to St. Augustine) because of what is done, but because of what is believed, as above. So here absolution is effectual, not because it is given, by whomsoever it be given, whether he err or do not err, but because it is believed.

"Further, I say, that when a man is under sin, his conscience is so vexed and disturbed, that in his own mind he rather believes he has the participation of all evils. And such a man is certainly nearest to justification, and has the beginning of grace. Therefore he must flee to the solace of the keys, that by the judgment of the priest he may be quieted and may gain peace, and may obtain confidence in the participation of all the benefits of Christ and the

Church. If any one does not believe this participation to be given him by the office of the priest, or doubts it, he is seduced, not by the error of the keys, but by his own infidelity, and afflicts his soul with grievous loss, and does injury and the highest irreverence to God and to His word. Accordingly, it is much better a man should not come to absolution, if he does not believe himself absolved, than that he should come without faith. For he approaches feignedly, and receives condemnation to himself, just as if he received baptism or the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper feignedly. Thus, contrition is not so necessary as faith; for the faith of absolution obtains incomparably more than the fervour of contrition.

“But most of us omit this faith, and labour in producing contrition, so that we teach men to believe their sins remitted only when they believe themselves perfectly contrite (that is, we teach them never to trust, but rather to labour unto despair), whereas, according to the prophet, we are to hope, not in our contrition, but in His word; for he says not—‘Remember my contrition unto thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to hope;’ but—‘Remember thy word, wherein thou hast caused me to hope.’ And again—‘In thy word’ (not, for instance, in our work) ‘have I put my trust.’ And again—‘My soul hath hoped in His word.’ And, as the 51st Psalm is in the Hebrew—‘Against Thee only have I sinned; therefore Thou wilt justify me by thy word.’ Therefore you are justified neither by the Sacrament nor by the priest, but by faith in the word of Christ,

through the priest and his office. What matter is it to you whether the Lord speak through a he-ass or a she-ass, so long as you hear His word, in which you may hope and believe?

“Thus I would understand the saying of our doctors, that the sacraments of the Church are given as an exercise to us—that is, as inestimable gifts, in which we have an opportunity of believing and of being justified. For formerly, in the days of Saul, the word of the Lord was precious; but now his word sounds to you through the lightest, the worst, and the most unlearned of men. Do you fix your attention on the word; dismiss the mere shell of the person; let him err or not err, you do not err if you believe him. If in this I err and am foolish, let him who is wise recall me.

“. . . Beware, then, lest you ever confide in any way in your contrition, but in the bare and naked word of thy best and most faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. Thy heart will deceive thee; He will not deceive thee, whether possessed or desired. . . .

“Accordingly it is not so necessary to say to one who applies for absolution, lest thou grieve? as to say, dost thou believe that thou canst be absolved by me; as Christ says to the blind men: ‘Believe ye that I am able to do this?’ All things are possible to him that believeth. For this faith certainly is chiefly proved in those who are troubled with fear of conscience, and feel that they lack faith. As for those who do not feel such misery, I know not whether these keys of comfort are for them; since only they who mourn

deserve to be comforted, and he only can be animated to faith in remission who trembles in doubt of possession.

“And at length, to make an end, this opinion, I conceive, does not diminish the power of the keys, as is charged against me; but brings it back from false honour and tyrannical reverence to its lawful and affectionate reverence. It is no wonder the keys are despised, if they are only offered for our acceptance under false honours—that is, under terrors. If their most wholesome benefit were known, the man must be made of stone or wood who would not kiss and embrace them with tears.

“Why, then, do we magnify the Pontiff on account of them, and picture him as a terrible being? The keys are not his; they are rather mine, given to me, granted for my salvation, my consolation, my peace and rest. The Pontiff is my servant and minister in the keys; he has no need of them as Pontiff; it is I who need them. But the flatterers bend everything to the Pontiffs. They put forward, not our consolations, but only the power of the Pontiffs in the keys, and they terrify us by those very things by which we ought most to be consoled. Thus are all things nowadays turned upside-down, and yet we do not realize the unhappiness of our times, in which there is so grievous an abuse of the best things turned into the worst.”

In these passages we have the elements of the Lutheran theology. I proceed to offer some observations in illustration of them.

In the first place, let us consider what Luther means by

Justification. Be it a forensic term or not, it is clear it conveys the deepest and most intense meaning to his mind. It implies the delivery of the soul from all the horror of despair, from all misery in suffering, from all unrest, and from all fear, here and hereafter. It implies the possession of every spiritual blessing—"not only that such great evils are removed, but such benefits conferred," that a man becomes a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. The explanation is evident. God to Luther was all in all. He cared for nothing in heaven or earth if he could know, or certainly believe, that God forgave him his sins, received him into His love and favour, and would permit him always to be by his Saviour, and to be uphelden by His right hand. The question is of a personal relation between two persons—the one, the pure and mighty God, whose awful footsteps Luther perceives without him in the earthquake and the storm, and within, in the implacable murmurs of his conscience; the other, himself, a feeble creature, conscious of innumerable sins, and sensible of endless miseries in himself and in the world around him. If this God were his God and he were assured of it, all would be well. He would be certain of final deliverance, and meanwhile no sufferings, wants, or distresses could mar his peace. Is God a being apart from him, and simply inflicting His power of justice upon him? or is He a being who unites Himself with him, who is his Father, his constant friend, his Saviour and Deliverer? That was a question with which Luther was wrestling in intense anxiety at the very

time he wrote these explanations. The old scholastic terminology had darkened the language of the Scriptures to him ; and, though he believed the truth, the words of the Scriptures themselves seemed at times to baffle him. "I was seized," he says, in the preface to his Latin works, "with a marvellous ardour to understand St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans ; but I was stopped by that single word in the first chapter : 'Therein is the justice of God revealed.' For I hated that word justice, which by the use and custom of all doctors I had been taught to understand philosophically, meaning what they call the formal or active justice, with which God is just and punishes the sinner and the unjust.

"Now, however irreprehensible a life I had lived as a monk, I felt myself before God a sinner, with a most restless conscience, and I could not trust that He was appeased by my satisfaction. I could not, therefore, love—nay, I hated a God who was just, and who punished sinners ; and, if not with silent blasphemy, certainly with vehement murmuring, I was indignant against God. As if, I said, it were not enough that sinners, miserable and eternally ruined by original sin, should be crushed with all kind of calamity by the law of the Decalogue, but God by the Gospel must needs add grief to grief, and by the Gospel itself must inflict still further on us His justice and anger. I raged with this savage and disturbed conscience, and I knocked importunately at Paul in that place, with a burning thirst to know what St. Paul could mean.

“At length, by the mercy of God, meditating days and nights, I observed the connection of the words—namely, ‘Therein is the justice of God revealed, as it is written: The just shall live by faith.’ There I began to understand the justice of God to be that by which the just man lives by the gift of God, namely, by faith; and that the meaning was, that the Gospel revealed the justice of God, that is, His passive justice, by which God justifies us beggars through faith, as it is written: ‘The just lives by faith.’ Here I felt myself absolutely born again; the gates of heaven were opened, and I had entered paradise itself. From thenceforward the face of the whole Scripture appeared changed to me. I ran through the Scriptures, as my memory would serve me, and observed the same analogy in other words—as, the work of God, that is, the work which God works in us; the strength of God, with which he makes us strong; the wisdom of God, with which he makes us wise; the power of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.

“And now, as much as I had formerly hated that word, the justice of God, so much did I now love it and extol it as the sweetest of all words to me; and thus that place in Paul was to me truly the gate of paradise. Afterwards I read Augustine ‘on the spirit and the letter,’ where, beyond my hope, I found that he, too, interpreted the justice of God in a similar way, as that with which God endues us when He justifies us. And, although this was as yet imperfectly expressed, and he did not explain everything clearly concerning imputation, it was nevertheless satisfactory, that

the justice of God was taught to be that by which we are justified."

Luther was thus led to grasp the conception of God as essentially good ; that is, as essentially the giver of all good things to his creatures. But one sentence in the above passages may remind us that this relation of God must necessarily assume a special and characteristic form when regarded as the relation, not merely of a Creator to creatures, but of person to person, of a father to a son. You at once introduce the element of personal regard, of moral acceptance—in short, of mutual "imputation" of moral characteristics. This becomes, not the accidental, but the essential element of the relationship. The physical connection between father and son constitutes the least part of their mutual relations. The son's enjoyment of the benefits his father can bestow upon him must, if they are to act as responsible beings, depend in a great degree on his moral attitude towards his father. It is perfectly possible for a son so to act that a father, though still feeling towards him as a father, is compelled to treat him as if he were not his son. Now, in such a case, suppose the father to send a message to his son, who had left his house, to the following effect :—Although you have acted unworthily of yourself and of me, my love towards you is unchanged, and I entreat you to return to my protection. I will forgive you the past, and say not one word about it. I will treat you in all respects as my son. I will impute to you the full character of a true son of mine ; and though I fear you may not be able at once to

shake off your inveterate bad habits and false ways of thought, I will not allow your failures to alter my way of regarding you—Would any one feel that this language was unnatural? Would not the son feel that this imputation on his father's part of a character he had not deserved, constituted the very essence and sweetness of his father's goodness? If such a message aroused once more in his heart the true feelings of filial affection, would he not feel that so long as his father's love were assured him, he could cheerfully bear all things and endure all things which might be thought necessary for him? What is this but the story of the Prodigal Son, with the simple addition of the father sending after his son, as God does after his wandering children in the Gospel? What constitutes the chief blessedness of that return to the father's house? Was it that the fatted calf was killed, that the best robe was put on him, that he had a new career before him, and an opportunity of shaking off his bad habits? On the contrary, was it not the sweetest element in that reception that the father ran to meet him, fell on his neck, and kissed him, that the son felt he was completely forgiven, that the past was forgotten, that a character was imputed to him which he had not deserved, and that, prodigal though he had been, he could nevertheless live in his father's house as his father's son? That moral imputation would constitute the first, the deepest, the most essential element in his future life. A man who is awake to the personal relation of his soul with a personal God must feel that the question of God's perfect forgiveness and acceptance

of him is the most imperious question of his life ; and a man who is sensible of his own inveterate sinfulness must feel that such forgiveness and acceptance involves an imputation of a character he does not deserve. To discuss this question with a man who is not alive to such a personal relation, or to such an inveterate sinfulness, is to discourse on colours to the blind.

Be it further observed that, however absolute the father's love, and however unconditional the message of forgiveness, the prodigal's actual readmission to the heart and home he had left cannot possibly take place until he accepts his father's offer. He is not a mere animal, to whom it is sufficient if he be brought back into his stall, and delivered from the wilderness. Unless he says from his heart, "I will arise, and go to my father," no love, no sacrifice on his father's part, is of the slightest benefit to him. The whole object of the father, the whole purpose to be gained, is the moral return of the son to the position he had forfeited, but which is offered him again. The justification we are contemplating has two sides—the act of the father and the act of the son. The father may yearn over his son, and may pursue him with an unquenchable affection ; but so long as the son will not listen, he is not, and he cannot be, reinstated in the blessed relationship he had abandoned.

Let us now notice especially, that if the son is thus to regain his filial peace, it is essential the father should speak to him, or send a message to him. If the prodigal son had been unable to speak again to his father, or to hear from

him, how could his heart have been at rest? Words are the necessary means of establishing and maintaining moral relations. It is not enough for the prodigal to return. He must also "say unto his father, I have sinned," and the father must pronounce the words of forgiveness and absolution. Mind can never be revealed to mind except by words. Two persons may entertain hopes, surmises, all but convictions, of mutual love, but the actual relationship of mutual love is not established until the revealing and declaratory words have been spoken. If there be no verbal communication between man and God, there can be no definite, no conscious moral relationship between them. Man may feel after God, he may be conscious that God is not far from him; but he cannot live in the consciousness of a distinct personal standing with Him. Once more, the son can have nothing but this word or message on which to rely. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" The father must act out of his own heart, and the son must take his father's word for it.

What is called "forensic language" has been so much decried in relation to this subject, that it may have been serviceable thus to have interpreted Luther's ideas in the language of a moral relationship, which furnishes perhaps the fundamental image of Scripture. But if St. Paul or any other writer of the Scripture uses forensic language, it is worse than idle to disparage it, or to attempt to get rid of it. Let us now translate these conceptions into the forensic language

of Luther. There is an essential distinction between guilt and punishment, and though the consciousness of guilt is the bitterest of all punishments, the discipline of punishment may exist apart from guilt. The remission of guilt, and the knowledge of that remission, are the first and the deepest need of every human soul. With that, every punishment is bearable ; without that, every blessing is intolerable. "Hell is punishment with guilt remaining." But for all purposes of the human conscience guilt remains so long as it is not known to be remitted. What does it avail a prisoner that he is acquitted, if he does not know it, or refuses to believe it, and lingers cowering in his cell? In short, it is this internal consciousness of the absence of God's favour, or the presence of guilt, which is the real condemnation of a human soul. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned ; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he believeth not the record which God gave of His Son." His want of belief is not so much, or not merely, the ground of his condemnation ; it is the essence of it. "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." A man who does not believe himself forgiven by God would be in hell in heaven ; a man who does believe himself forgiven might be in heaven in hell. Luther, therefore, reiterates again and again that the one thing the soul needs is to have this sense of guilt removed from the conscience, to be at peace with God, and therefore to have no more fear. As an illustration, it will be enough to quote the following noble passage, which I must, though If

cannot, translate. The vigorous Latin of the last sentence will be found in the motto prefixed to this essay.

“The trumpeters of indulgences seem to conceive of the punishment of souls as inflicted from without, and as being entirely external, instead of being generated within in the conscience; as though God simply removed punishments from them, whereas the contrary would be more true, namely, that He removes the souls from punishments. As it is written, ‘I removed his shoulder from the burden;’ not ‘I removed the burden from his shoulder.’ And again, ‘When thou passest through the fire the flame shall not hurt thee.’ How will it not hurt? unless because He gives confidence of heart, so that a man fears not the fire,—not that there is no fire, when it is said he must pass through it. Wherefore the shoulder is not removed from burdens except by healing the fear of the soul and by comforting it; as has been said before, that punishment is not conquered by fearing it, but by loving and despising it. But indulgences do not take away fear. Nay, so far as they go, they rather increase it, by persuading men to gain relaxation of punishment as of something to be hated. But God’s design is to have fearless, calm, and generous sons, in all eternity and perfection, who dread absolutely nothing, but triumph over and despise all things by confidence in his grace. He hates all the cowards who are confounded with the fear of everything—even at the sound of a rustling leaf.”

Now then, Luther asks, by what means is this deliverance

from guilt, this assurance of a Father's reconciliation to be obtained? Not, certainly, by experience. That would lead to a precisely opposite conclusion. The first vision of Divine holiness tends to appal the soul and to render confidence impossible. Nor does this apprehension tend to diminish with the growth of the Christian life. The holier a man becomes, the deeper is the witness of his experience that he is a sinner, the more incredible does it seem to him that he should be absolutely forgiven and unconditionally reconciled. We are told that the late Bishop of Salisbury, when praised for his admirable labours, said he felt more and more deeply, as death approached, that God's judgment was a very different thing from the judgment of man. Had he had his experience alone to rely on, his hope would have diminished, not increased, as he drew nearer to his end. Nor, indeed, under any circumstances, could a man's personal experience be any sure evidence to him of the mind of God. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God." On what then are we to rely? On nothing, Luther answers, but the bare word of Christ, which promises us the gratuitous, the unconditional forgiveness and mercy of God. Faith in that word is the only possible means for obtaining peace of soul. But when my conscience accuses me, and by that very accusation would make me afraid of God, and drive me from Him, when my own sufferings and the sufferings I see about me seem to be so many signs and evidences of the

wrath of God, I turn to that blessed word of reconciliation—a word confirmed by the sacrifice of life itself, and written in divine tears of blood—on that word I rest my soul, and in the faith of it I possess, through all temptations, an unwavering peace. In short, “If God be for us,” as this Word declares, “who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

It may appear then, after all, that the cardinal term of the Lutheran theology is not so much Faith as the Word of God; understanding that expression not primarily as identical with the Scriptures, but as meaning the message or promise of God to us. With Luther, therefore, as with St. John, it is identical with Christ. The life and the words of Christ are the word of God. There, and there alone, it is that the plain and definite promise is revealed on which a man may build his faith, and by virtue of which he may enter into the conscious and assured joy of forgiveness and reconciliation. I have heard the question asked, Why use the term faith rather than trust? The answer is, that I rest my soul not on hopes and desires, but on a distinct word of God, and trust in a word is properly distinguished as faith. It has been asked, again, why we should always speak of faith in Christ? The answer is, that faith means faith in a word, and that word is Christ. Justification by faith, and justification by faith in Christ, are simply identical expressions. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Has any one ever ventured to declare that God is

anywhere else reconciling the world unto Himself? He may be perceived elsewhere ruling and judging the world, but where else is He to be found reconciling it? If a man really throws himself amidst the sins, the sufferings, and the deaths of the men and women around him, he will find that none but a suffering and a dying God—nay, a God who Himself bears our sins—gives sufficient witness that he is a reconciling God. But that witness, as it is the last witness that can be given, is also sufficient; and there is no sin, suffering, or death for which the Cross is not an adequate consolation.

It is now easy to realize the office which Luther vindicates for the Church, the priest, and the sacraments. They are the witnesses to men of the word of God, and, consequently, they are God's instruments of faith and justification. That word is doubtless fully expressed in the Bible. But Luther felt that the power of a mere book was doubled, or in great measure created, by a living exponent of its meaning; and that, in attaching outward and visible signs to His message, our Lord had recognized a need to which all human experience bears witness. In maintaining, however, that to the Church, its officers, and ordinances, had been committed the word of reconciliation, the promise of God, Luther felt he vindicated for them the highest conceivable office. In this office he strenuously upheld the sacraments; on the one side against the Papists, who tended to treat them as mere mechanical or magical agencies; and, on the other side, against the Sacramentaries, who tended to

treat them as mere acts of confession and memorial on the part of man. They consist, he always urged, of two parts—the Word of God, and the element to which it is attached and by which it is conveyed. Faith is, indeed, needed, in order to receive their benefits. But why? Because there is a promise of God offered to our belief in them. If the sacraments were not genuine promises on the part of God, there would be no occasion for our faith. The promise is there, whether you believe it or not. If you do not believe it, you commit the heinous sin of refusing belief to God's promise. Baptism brings to each individual soul the message that God claims him for his child. The question is not, how far may a man venture to believe that message, but how dare he disbelieve it? Our Church, at all events, forbids us, in her catechism, to bring up our children in any doubtful faith. The Lord's Supper, in the same way, is God's perpetual message to us that He gives us participation in all the benefits of Christ. It becomes, therefore, a gross perversion of this ordinance to represent it as an act on the part of man to propitiate God. God is eternally propitiated by the one sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction once offered for the sins of the whole world, and the sacrament is His witness to declare this propitiation to us. This principle vindicates for the sacraments a real operative power, and maintains, at the same time, the truly moral and spiritual character of God's dealings with the human soul. Luther interprets the absolving power of the priesthood in a similar sense; but he has explained this

so distinctly in the passages I have quoted, that I shall not further dwell upon it. The priest has a real power to produce faith, by declaring God's word, and therefore a real power to produce justification.

The doctrine, then, may be presented in a form which ought at least to win for it consideration in this scientific age. It is the declaration of an eternal law of God's spiritual working, to which man is called to conform his belief and practice. That law and fact is, that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. This is a truth of the divine nature alone, and includes the doctrine of the Atonement. It is beside my present mark to discuss that doctrine. But I may observe that if Christ be God, then the fact of Christ having suffered in the flesh is an unquestionable element in the divine mind, and that with Him with whom all things are present that element must have been present from the foundation of the world. The relation of that element to the other elements in the divine mind is, however, a distinct subject of discussion. For the present purpose it is enough to know that in Christ, his life and death, God is revealed as reconciling and forgiving the world. That is the immutable law—as immutable as all the other laws of the divine will and government. It is the office of the Church, of the ministry, and of the sacraments, to proclaim this truth, and to bring men into harmony with it. Their office is not to alter God's will, but to change man's will. It is their duty and their power to bring men, by the ministry of God's

word, to recognize Him in this character, and to live in the spirit of faith, prayer, and love which such a revelation demands. Does not this correspond to the character of God's dealings with men as elsewhere manifested ?

From this point of view the current misconceptions of the doctrine, and the chief objections to it, are readily exposed. From the first, Luther insisted that the essence of faith lay in an apprehension of truth, and he felt that all the errors of his adversaries sprang from their inability to realize this conception. Thus, to quote for once from another disputation, "That some," he says, "do not understand how faith alone justifies, arises from their not knowing what faith is, nor having ever tasted it, dreaming that it is a quality latent in the soul. But when the Word of God sounds as truth, and the heart adheres to it by faith, then the heart is imbued with the truth of the word itself, and by the word of truth it is made true (*per verbum veritatis verificatur*). Just as cold wood adheres to hot iron, and is itself heated and set on fire by it." Justification by faith is, in fact, "justification by verification," if you like the term ; but spiritual justification must be by spiritual truth, and that truth is CHRIST.

Take one of the commonest instances of this misunderstanding. A certain school is fond of representing it as the Lutheran teaching that a man is justified when he believes himself justified. It is implied, of course, that Luther taught reliance on our own convictions. The fact, it will now be seen, is exactly the reverse. Luther taught

men to distrust themselves, and to trust God's word. God declares that He does not impute their trespasses to them ; that is, that He justifies them ; and Luther taught them absolutely to believe His word. Erasmus took a fancy to Sir Thomas More's horse, and wished he could have it with him. Said Sir Thomas, in allusion to the new doctrine, " Believe that you have, and you have it." Now, suppose Sir Thomas More had actually sent his horse to Calais, the saying would have been not only witty, but true. The horse would have been there, and Erasmus would have had nothing to do but to believe the announcement of its arrival, and to fetch it. That is an exact illustration of the fallacy in the statement just quoted. If God has not offered His free forgiveness to every soul, then of course it is monstrous to tell them they can have it if they believe it ; but if He has offered forgiveness, " let them believe that they have, and they have it."

Consider, again, Luther's alleged disparagement of the need of repentance. So far from that, we have found him building his doctrine on the assertion that when God would justify a man, He first damns him. The wrath of God and the love of God, the Law and the Gospel, he regarded as the two essential revelations of God, and no man ever declared more constantly that the one cannot be apprehended without the other. But both are alike and always true ; and he refused to limit the breadth of his proclamation of the truth by the narrowness of our apprehension of it. In short, he regarded repentance and faith not as

conditions required from man, but as gifts bestowed by God through the revelation of Himself. It is God's word, both in His Law and in His Gospel, which awakens to repentance and creates faith. It is God, from the first to the last, who gives to man, not man who gives to God. Moreover, true repentance is one of the last attainments of a Christian, as its spirit was seen in its highest perfection in our Saviour's sacrifice for us. In fact, true repentance is impossible without faith, because it must be based, not on mere fear, but on the love of God, and on grief for having offended Him. Thus, whereas Luther is charged with weakening repentance, he really establishes it in deeper intensity and permanence. The two following passages will sufficiently indicate his teaching on this point: He denounced—

“That laborious and useless method of confession, or rather of despair and of ruining souls, by which we have been hitherto taught to number the sand; that is, to discuss, collect, and measure our sins in detail, in order to produce contrition. And when we have done this, the result is that we excite afresh our desires or aversions by the memory of the past; and in the very act of contrition for the past we sin afresh. Even at the best, this kind of contrition is forced, grievous, and purely fictitious—in short, a feigned contrition from fear of punishment. But it is in this manner we are taught to become contrite for our sins; that is, to struggle after what is impossible or even mischievous.

“Whereas true contrition must commence from the mercy

and the benefits of God; above all, from the wounds of Christ; so that a man should first learn to be displeased with himself by contemplating the divine goodness, and from thence come to hatred of himself and love of the mercy of God. Then will his tears flow, and he will hate himself from his heart, but always on this side of despair. Then he will hate sin, not on account of punishment, but from his contemplation of the goodness of God, by the sight of which he is preserved from despair, and hates himself with earnestness, even with joy. And thus where there is true contrition for one sin, there will at the same time be true contrition for all. Thus in Rom. ii., 'Knowest thou not that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?' Ah! St. Paul, how many are ignorant of this, even among those who are teachers of others! Thus in Numbers, we read how the Children of Israel were delivered from the fiery serpents, not by the sight and the horror of them, but rather by turning away from them and looking at the brazen serpent, that is, at Christ. So our sins ought rather to be considered in the wounded Christ than in our conscience. For there they are dead, here they live. Otherwise, if the torture of such teachers were to be maintained, it would follow that if a man were suddenly hurried to death, he could not be saved, because he could not have time to recollect his sins."

Again, in a letter to Staupitz, prefixed to the treatise we have been considering, he says:—

"I remember, reverend Father, amidst thy most sweet

and wholesome conversations, with which the Lord Jesus is wont marvellously to comfort me, we happened once to mention the word Penitence ; when, thinking with pity on the fate of many consciences, and on those torturers who teach what they call a rule of confession, with infinite and insupportable precepts, we heard thee say, like a voice from heaven, that no repentance is true save that which begins from the love of justice and of God, and that what those confessors make the end and the consummation of repentance is rather its beginning.

“ This saying of thine stuck in me like a sharp arrow of the mighty, and I began to compare it with the Scriptures which taught of penitence. And lo ! the most delightful pastime ! Words played round me on all sides, and smiled and leapt to the tune of this assertion, so that whereas formerly there was no more bitter word to me in all the Scripture than repentance (although I had industriously simulated it before God, and endeavoured to express a feigned and forced love), nothing now sounds to me sweeter or more grateful than repentance. Thus sweet do the precepts of God become when we understand that they are to be read, not in books only, but in the wounds of our sweetest Saviour.”

This deep and spiritual repentance taught him, like the Apostle, to glory in tribulations ; and of those who accuse him of neglecting the stern side of the Christian life, none have written nobler words than these :—

“ The theologian of the cross—he, that is, who speaks of a

crucified and hidden God—teaches that punishment, crosses, and death, are the most precious of all treasures, and the most sacred of all relics, which the Lord Himself of this theology consecrated and blessed, not only by the touch of His most holy flesh, but also by the embrace of His supremely holy and divine will, and left them here to be truly kissed, sought, and embraced. Happy, indeed, and blessed is he whom God may deem worthy to have bestowed on him these treasures of the relics of Christ—or, rather, who understands that they are bestowed on him. For to whom are they not offered? As St. James says: ‘My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;’ for it is not for every one to have the grace and glory to accept these treasures, but only for the most elect of the sons of God.

“Many make pilgrimages to Rome, and other holy places, to see the coat of Christ, the bones of the martyrs, the homes and the footsteps of the saints. I do not condemn them. But I grieve that we should be so ignorant of the true relics—namely, the passions and crosses which have sanctified the bones and relics of the martyrs, and made them worthy of such veneration. Not only do we not accept them when offered to us at home, but we repulse them with all our might, and chase them away from place to place; whereas we ought to demand of God, with the utmost thirst and with perennial tears, that He would give us such precious relics of Christ, the most sacred of all, as being the gift of the elect sons of God. So sacred are these relics, so precious are such treasures, that whereas

others can be preserved in earth, or, when most honoured, in gold, silver, jewels, silk, these can only be preserved in heavenly, living, reasonable, immortal, pure, holy receptacles, that is, in the hearts of the faithful, inestimably more precious than all the gold and jewels in the world."

The following, again, are the closing propositions of his great disputation :—

"Away with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, Peace, peace, and there is no peace.

"Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, The Cross, the Cross, and there is no Cross.

"Christians must be exhorted that they strive to follow Christ, their head, through punishments, deaths, and hell,

"And thus trust to enter heaven rather through many tribulations than through a tranquil security."

It can scarcely be necessary after this to answer the common taunt that Luther's doctrine tends to encourage an antinomian security. What is the proclamation of the treatise we have been considering? Is it that a man may escape the punishment of his sin whenever he pleases? On the contrary, that is the very doctrine of the preachers of indulgences, against which Luther indignantly protests. What he proclaims is, that a pure and just God offers His pardon, His purity, His justice, His truth to every soul that will accept them from Him. He declares that this God, in the love He bears to every such soul, will purge it from its iniquity, its injustice, its impurity, by any discipline that may be necessary. The soul that desires this blessing can have it

for the asking ; but they are not antinomian souls that ask it.

It will now be seen with what perfect accuracy our article expresses this doctrine. It commences by laying down the fundamental law of God's dealings with our souls. "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, through faith, and not for our own works or deservings." This is the law, and we have nothing to do but to conform ourselves to it. "Wherefore that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine." God offers us forgiveness for our Saviour's sake—that is, out of his own heart, and gratuitously ; and when we accept that promise we are reconciled to Him. It may be worth while adding that this explanation perfectly agrees with St. Paul's illustration of the case of Abraham. The same divine law of forgiveness determined God's dealings with him as with us ; for the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. The essential element in Abraham's life, as in ours, was that God spoke to him, or that God's word came to him ; and when he believed that word he entered into a reconciled relation with God. Wherever God's word is, there faith may exist. The two things are essentially correlative.

Luther called this doctrine the article of a standing or a falling Church. We shall do well to reflect whether, in a Christian country, it be not also the article of a standing or a falling civilization ? It is an essential result of Christianity to deepen men's sense of sin and evil. When our Lord

declared of the Holy Spirit that He should convince the world of sin, He established an influence which has been working on the conscience of Christians ever since, and which cannot be evaded. The consequence is that a Christian people are liable to become the most cowardly and the most superstitious of all people, unless the Divine Deliverer from sin be upheld among them in his due office. Those fears and apprehensions from an unseen world are not to be conjured away by declaring they are mere phantoms, and that the material world is all with which we are concerned. They are only to be mastered by belief in a Saviour who has overcome them, and who, if we ask Him, will deliver us from them. I believe that the course of history and of human thought since the Reformation has been marked by a peculiar freedom and courage, and that the "fearless, calm, and generous" spirit, of which Luther speaks, has in fact been promoted by the proclamation of his great doctrine. Even where it has not been explicitly recognized, its influence has been felt in a stronger confidence in God and God's laws, and in a readiness to pursue the truth at all hazards of error and of its inevitable punishment, secure that all was well with us in His hands. Of the two, I will not hesitate to say that God is less dishonoured by an undue confidence than by an unworthy fear. But a confidence based on a false foundation, or on no foundation, is liable at any moment to be overthrown. Living trust in a justifying and saving God is the only permanent security for manly courage, for womanly confidence, or for love of

truth. But that trust alone is sure which rests on faith ; and faith can only endure when it is quickened by the Cross of Christ. If the clergy are anywhere suspected as the enemies of freedom, they must have utterly perverted their message. They are charged with a Gospel from God of deliverance from all fear, of peace to all consciences, of salvation from every evil, by converting every evil into good. In this great doctrine of Justification by Faith in the Cross of Christ, we hold the charter of the freedom of the world ; and when we preach it aright, men will understand once more how, for time as well as for eternity, the power to Bind and Loose has been conferred upon the Church.

APPENDIX.

I VENTURE to add the greater part of a disputation in which Luther collects and enunciates with great force the main points of his doctrine. The previous essay will have indicated the sense of the principal terms employed. It need hardly be added that the form in which such propositions are stated is often purposely extreme :—

Propositions proposed for disputation by Dr. Martin Luther for the investigation of the truth, and for the comfort of disturbed consciences :—

1. Of the two powers of remission possessed by the Church, viz., of punishment and of guilt, the remission of guilt is the more excellent.
2. The remission of guilt gives rest to the heart, and removes the greatest of all punishments, viz., the conscience of sin.
3. The remission of punishment sometimes aggravates an evil conscience, and sometimes encourages a worse presumption.
4. Remission of guilt reconciles man to God ; remission of punishment reconciles man to man, that is, to the Church.

5. When guilt is remitted, and the conscience set free, there is no more punishment in punishment, but glory in tribulations.

6. A man may be saved without remission of punishment, but by no means without remission of guilt.

7. It is profitable towards salvation for a man who is absolved from guilt to omit obtaining release from punishment.

8. Remission of guilt does not depend on the contrition of the sinner, nor on the office or power of the priest.

9. It depends rather on faith—faith, that is, in the word of Christ saying, “Whatsoever thou shalt loose,” &c.

10. For it is true that it is not the Sacrament of faith but the faith of the Sacrament, that is, not what is done, but what is believed, which justifies.

11. Christ did not intend the salvation of men to rest in the hand or on the will of man.

12. But as it is written, “Upholding all things by the word of his power,” and “purifying their hearts by faith.”

13. To assert that the remission of guilt is uncertain, because of the uncertainty of contrition, is an error amounting to infidelity.

14. Let the priest and the sinner alike be never so uncertain about contrition, absolution is none the less valid if the man believe himself absolved.

15. It is certain, therefore, that sins are forgiven if you believe them forgiven, because the promise of Christ our Saviour is certain.

16. A man absolved by the power of the keys ought

rather to die, and to deny every creature, than to doubt of his absolution.

17. He who doubts that his absolution is acceptable to God, doubts at the same time that Christ was true in saying "whatsoever," &c.

18. To build remission upon contrition is to build the faith of God upon the sand, that is, upon the work of man.

19. It is an injury to the sacrament, and an engine of despair, to disbelieve absolution until contrition be certain.

20. Nay, for a man thus to desire to build assurance of conscience on contrition is to make God a liar, and himself true.

21. Such men do not confide in the mercy and the word of Christ, but presume most ruinously on their own works and strength.

22. Nay, they most perversely desire themselves to confirm the word and faith, instead of rather being confirmed by the word and by faith.

23. Priests are not authors of remission, but ministers of the word unto the faith of remission.

24. The power of the keys works, by the word and command of God, a firm and infallible work, unless a man be dishonest.

25. The priest receives sufficiently evident signs of contrition if he sees that the sinner seeks and believes absolution.

26. Nay, the sinner ought to be much more diligently examined whether he believe himself absolved, than whether he be duly grieved.

27. The priest also must beware lest he confine his examination so entirely to contrition, as to lead a man to believe that he is absolved on account of it.

28. The saying of Christ, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee," ought rather to be impressed upon a man than his own worthiness examined.

29. It follows that this word of Christ, "Whosoever sins ye remit," &c., is to be understood, not of punishment, but of guilt.

30. Just as the priest truly teaches, baptizes, communicates, and, nevertheless, these things belong solely to the Spirit working within,

31. So, the priest truly remits sins and absolves from guilt, and yet this belongs solely to the Spirit working within.

32. In all these instances, while he ministers the word of Christ, he at the same time calls forth faith, by which the sinner is inwardly justified.

33. For nothing justifies but the faith of Christ alone, for which the ministry of the word by the priest is necessary.

34. Without this faith, the contrition of sinners is a work of despair, and rather offends God than reconciles Him.

* * * * *

42. The sacraments of the new law are not efficacious signs of grace in such a sense as that it is sufficient for the recipients to oppose no obstacle.

43. On the contrary, he who approaches any sacrament

without faith approaches feignedly, and in consequence approaches to his own condemnation.

44. The sacraments of the old and the new law are thus distinguished—that the former justified the flesh, the latter justify the spirit.

45. There is present in the new sacraments, but there was absent in the old, the word of promise, and, therefore, also the faith of the receiver of remission.

46. As venial sins do not belong to confession and the absolution of the keys, so neither do all mortal sins.

47. If a man were required to confess all mortal sins, and to be absolved from them, he would be required to do a simple impossibility.

48. No man knows how often he sins mortally even in good works, through vain glory.

49. He ought to confess those sins only which are known either to himself or to others to be mortal—that is, public crimes.

50. Despairing of all the rest, he should cast himself with confidence into the abyss of the mercy of God, who is faithful to his promise.

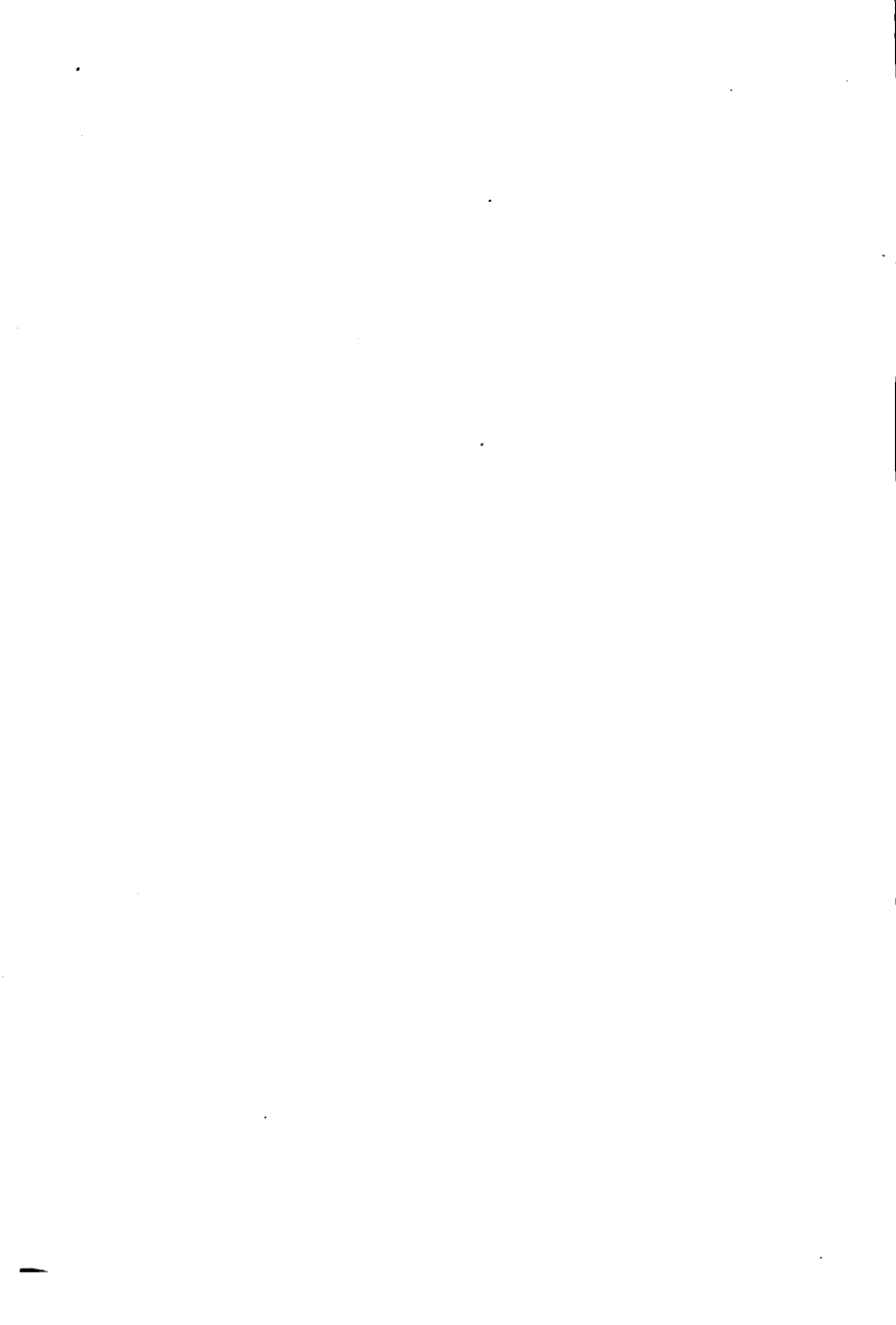
The sum of the whole:—"The just shall live, not by works, nor by the law, but by faith" (Rom. i.).

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS
IN THEOLOGY



MOTHER CHURCH

By Rev. James M. Miller.



MOTHER CHURCH.



POOR woman is mentioned in one of Mr. Francis Paget's books who spoke of her clergyman's wife as "The Universal Mother." Now any person deserving so holy a name must, doubtless, have been full of good works and alms-deeds, like Dorcas of old. But, much more, she must also have been thoroughly inclusive in her goodness: she could not have deserved such a name if, for example, she made Church-going a condition to be fulfilled in order to receive of her goodness; she must have been good to all, kind even to the unthankful and the evil, and not demanding but forgiving such debts as excessive thanks and servility for benefits bestowed. And yet we may be sure that those who gave her such a good name did not think her perfect. They knew she had faults; but they did not think most of her faults, but of her motherhood. They might think she would be a greater blessing still in the parish if it were not for these faults, but there she was—not perfect, inasmuch as she was human—but a most real blessing to them. Her presence among them was like sunlight and warmth, and her death would cause a sharp sense of bereavement, and

she would be long remembered and lovingly spoken of after she was gone.

Let nobody think that there is going to be any attempt made in this paper to make out a case of perfection for the Church of England. Yet it is thought that upon the whole she deserves the sincere love and respect of all Englishmen. She is so thoroughly inclusive ; she is gentle and good to those who rejoice to be her children, and to those who deny all relationship to her. She is very kind even to the unthankful and the evil. The Church of England does deserve the holy name of Mother.

It would indeed be no unworthy object to point out, with a view to their removal, the many inconsistencies which have marred the Church's usefulness. It is the object of this paper to draw attention to the great and distinguishing excellence of the Church—her true and reasonable catholicity. That many inconsistencies and even contradictions exist, there is no attempt to deny ; but let her be judged by the greater good in her rather than by the less evil. The spots on the sun may be very large indeed, but they are not so important to us as the warmth and light coming from the sun notwithstanding the spots. And even so of the Church ; we ought not to think her valueless, nor work for her destruction, because she has defects and is sometimes inconsistent with her own great and principal teaching ; but we ought rather to cherish her, and thank God for the witness she bears of the one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.*

And if it does jar upon the ears of any of us to hear a not unfrequent repetition of expressions in her mouth which seem inconsistent with an universal love and the words of Jesus, "The Father himself loveth you,"* and with a love for us for our own sakes, we must take refuge in the thought that it cannot be a real inconsistency, that is, not a contradiction of the Church's general teaching, but from the nature of human infirmity, which can never by one expression set forth all sides of truth. Evidence, no doubt, is not wanting of the danger of harm resulting from such words being regarded as setting forth the doctrine of the Church. In a book† lately published, and so largely read as to be out of print, the extraordinary statement is made that it is impossible that Jesus could ever have said the words ascribed to Him in John xvi. 23, viz., "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name He will give it you." Jesus, the writer says, could not have said such words, because we know that men have asked for many things, and used His name in their prayers, and yet that God has not granted them their requests. That Jesus is, in this verse, represented as intending the use of His name in prayer at all, is, to say the least, a remarkable assumption. For surely He meant "in my spirit," "as I pray"—thus, "Father, if Thou be willing," "Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt," "Thy will be done." If we also say in our very hearts, "Thy will be done," and "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt," is it not plain that the promise of Jesus,

* John xvi. 26, 27.

† Rev. Mr. Voysey's "Sling and the Stone," vol. iv.

as given in John xvi. 23, must come true? He never put His own will first, and if we pray after His pattern, we shall have "whatsoever we ask." For that which is first with us is, "Thy will be done"—all else is as nothing, and His will must be done. He must give us this, the dearest desire of our hearts. We may regret that so many of the collects seem to miss this, as it were, and to ascribe to the Father a certain unwillingness to bless His children; but we have plainly a right to treat such words, if any do take exception, rather as inconsistencies than as destroying the great rule to which they seem exceptions.

Hard measure has been dealt to the Church of England by those who pass over the rule to seize on exceptional passages. Because there are some who rejoice in the exceptional teaching, who strive and cry and cause their voices to be heard in the streets, the Church too often has had a bad name with many who, if they would judge for themselves, should speak nothing but good of her. She is accounted by some (and upon her unworthy sons be the blame of such a reputation) even to be more exclusive and sectarian than some of the sects. But if the oftenest repeated words of the Book of Common Prayer set forth her true meaning, such an account of her is manifestly untrue. The Tabernacle is no doubt confined and limited too often by those who ought rather to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of it; and the great Church-door has been kept closed until the Church has become damp and uninviting, whereas the door ought to stand wide open, so that the Church may be filled with the free fresh air of

heaven. But this is not her own doing. If there be some who say that those not baptized by episcopally-ordained men are unworthy of recognition as members of Christ's Body, are such, therefore, not of the Church's or Christ's Body? Is it the Church's teaching? The Church* does not so teach, although some mistaken Churchmen may do so. If some among us give to the word "catholic" a strangely contradictory and repellent meaning, if they make that blessed word speak only of narrowness and sectarianism and exclusion, and make it a test incapable of proof, does "catholic," for all their hard speeches, mean anything but "universal?" No, thank God, not according to the Church of England. Exclusiveness must be put down to the account of individual men, and stray expressions: it is not a characteristic of the Church. It is indeed grievous to charge some of her sons' failings upon her; but they speak not her true words. They have not breathed her spirit, nor drunk from the well of her love.

In some parts of England, when people become "anxious about their souls," as they say, they are apt to think it necessary to what they call "join a society:" that is to say, join some one of the very many separated religious bodies. Now there is not the least want of charity in saying that the very watchword of these separate bodies is separation, or *exclusion*. Their members claim to have "come out," and to be "separate." They neither have nor desire part or lot with others, nor that others should have either part or lot with them. Sad will be the day when the great glory of

* See the Primary Charge of the present Bishop of Ely.

the Church of England is abrogated, and she comes down from her high place or throne of universal charity, and sits low in the dust, crying, "Stand aside, for I am other than and holier than ye; I have the Succession,* and ye have it not; I have a commission from God, and ye have not; my ministers are priests, and yours are false teachers; my priests speak truth which is warranted to be true because they say it, because of their origin, and ye have no such warrant, and speak therefore with stammering lips." That such language is heard now is, no doubt, a grave sign of the future of the Church. If they do such things in the green tree, what will they do in the dry? If even now, in the day of State-connection, such boastings are heard, how will it be when the Erastianism of which they complain has become a thing of the past? They think, perhaps, that that will be a glorious day, but it will, we fear, rather be a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of shame and contempt, because of uncertainty and divisions. For then will the national witness for universal love be exchanged for a sectarian witness for the superior excellence of Episcopacy over Independency, of Anglicanism over Wesleyanism, or of the righteousness of wearing one vestment and not another. Can England afford such a sacrifice as this? Is the symbol of religion to be "separation?" Is the only voice which speaks of universality to be on that account

* The following is a copy of an advertisement:—"Defence of Holy Orders in the Church of England. Documents and Incidental Evidence; together with a Photozincograph of the Register of Archbishop Parker's Consecration. Latin and English. By ———, B.A., Priest of the Church of England. Large folio cloth, 156 pp., 3s." Does our claim to minister rest upon Photozincographs?

silenced? If so, then we may write Ichabod on our greatness, for our glory will have departed, and that which constitutes the Church will be gone. It will be then but a sect; for its real greatness, and heart, and spirit will have departed, and only a petty sense of superiority to other sects left in its place. This so-called "free" Church will be tied and bound and yoked, "cabined, cribbed, confined;" and that iron yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear will once more be placed on our necks. How many, do we imagine, will bear it patiently?

"Episcopalians" will not find themselves a large sect.* The laity will hardly appreciate that "privilege" which will be all then awarded to them, "to hear and obey," which the clergy of this school pretty unanimously pronounce to be all that is theirs.

We are at present the most free, least exclusive, most Catholic Church in the world. We do not set any bounds to love, forasmuch as we see that our Father above sets no bounds to His love. Shall we cast away our true Theocracy and choose to ourselves priests for God? Is there to be yet one more attempt in England at priestly dominion? Are we about to reject the service of perfect freedom, and choose instead a servile assent to man's authority? Shall we deny the God-given right of every man to judge and discern between good and evil, and commit all judgment to self-constituted lords over God's heritage? Must our spiritual commonwealth be split up into many little dictatorships?

* See *Contemporary Review*, April, 1870, pp. 144-146. "It is certain that the disestablished Church of England would not keep together as one Church. The State acts towards it, to use Richard Baxter's words, as 'a unifying head.'"

This, however, seems to be the rock on which the so-called "free" Church of the future *must* make shipwreck. Would to God we and the thousands who own her, could raise a sufficient cry to prevent the wilful committing of our ship to such a hopeless current as the now coveted freedom will assuredly prove !

At present we are permitted to see for ourselves and to judge for ourselves. And this is our glory and greatness. And this, our liberty, has a very great influence—an influence not suspected, perhaps, but most real—upon all the other religious bodies in the country. They are, every one of them, the better, because the freer for our freedom. The narrow spirits among them would have our liberty abridged, so that there should be no more opportunity of comparison between their bondage and our freedom. Their children would be more obedient and dependent if the vision of the boldness and freedom of the Church's children were no longer possible. But there are who breathe more freely—who think more charitably—who cannot tell, maybe, through what channel their more godly disposition has come to them—and who are not unaware that they owe it to the Church of England as now by law established. She is Mother Church to them, as to us ; Mother, although they are ignorant of her, and acknowledge her not ; and who will themselves be orphaned and comfortless, as deprived of many holy things, no doubt, when she is removed out of her place.

Nobody, it is hoped, will so far misjudge the spirit in which this paper is written as to see in it any plea whatever

merely for Church temporalities. Not these, but the great glory of the Church in her truly universal character is what we wish to set forth. And surely this glory is given her by God, and is a very precious trust: may He, therefore, if it be His will, keep us from betraying it! But it may be that His judgment is about to come upon us in the spirit of those words, "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled." * He may be saying to us, "Ye will not bear witness of me; ye do not care for the Light of the world? Ye will bear witness of yourselves—of Church system and order and authority; ye will teach that truth is not truth till ye give it your sanction and allowance? Ye will kindle fires and compass yourselves about with sparks, that ye may see the Light? Ye cannot trust Light to be its own witness, or for it to light without your help? Be it so, then; walk in the light of your own fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled; put your sparks to the proof; but alas! as they die out one by one, ye will lie down in sorrow. I spake to you in your prosperity,† and ye said, 'We will not hear;' lie down then in sorrow, and in years to come cry to Me from the depths (seeing ye will not now); let experience speak. Learn ye, by losing it, how precious is the gift ye threw away." We would not stay His hand, nor say, What doest thou? For He must do right. Yet, as St. Augustine says, "*Opera mutat nec mutat consilium*;" it may not yet be too late to forsake all "lying vanities"‡ of teachings and doings which exclude,

* Isaiah i. 11.

† Jeremiah xxii. 21.

‡ Jonah ii. 8.

and rejoice in "our own mercy"*—and continue our witness for the universal love which has been committed to us by God. He is the God that repents† Him of evil; it may be that He will not even now remove our candlestick out of its place. He may yet let us bear witness for Him and speak good of His name. We have been ungrateful, but He delighteth in mercy.

It is now purposed to make some extracts from the Book of Common Prayer, and to offer a few remarks on each. It may seem a strange thing to call attention to such very well-known words. But their being well known is no reason for all having entered into their real spirit. Many know the sound, but not, perhaps, the spirit. We believe that if their spirit were truly known and felt, we should all join in the support of that Church which is truly a bond of peace.

It is possible that the meaning here given to some of the Prayer Book words may not be exactly that which some of us have been accustomed to give them. But this ought not to be complained of, and would not, if we remember the multiform aspects of truth. Holy Scripture itself is received differently by many. We do not think it impossible to understand Joshua x. in a sense which is different from an absolutely literal meaning.‡ Nobody thinks he ought to apply all the sentiments of the Psalms in their literalness. We think it possible that Job was not a living man, but an

* Jonah ii. 8.

† Jonah iv. 2, &c.

‡ As to the tenth chapter of Joshua, however,—which many take to be a crucial instance,—it is curious to observe how the absolute literality is corroborated by the Tuscan, Egyptian, and Chinese Calendars giving what they call a "double day" at the end of May—about that epoch.

allegory or poetical example ; nor does such a doubt take anything from the great teaching of the book bearing that name. We consider ourselves at liberty to judge and discern the meaning and the integrity of the various versions of Scripture, and if we have such liberty (a liberty plainly accorded us in Scripture*), shall we complain if the Prayer Book is to be judged by a like measure? No one, it is to be hoped, will claim for the Prayer Book a greater sacredness and higher inspiration than is claimed for the Bible.

We are capable of judging of ourselves† that which is right ; we are capable of judging as wise men of that which is said ;‡ we judge as men with consciences, as men from whom the Spirit of God is not removed. Let us claim our right, our individual right to hear what God the Lord will speak, and to understand, by that which He has made us, sons and daughters. And then, if the rain descend and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon our house, it shall not fall. For every living stone of this spiritual house “hath§ the witness in himself;” they are bound together with no untempered mortar, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against this power, it has for its foundation the Rock of Ages, even the Spirit of Truth.

I. Let our first quotation then be from the “General Confession.” There we meet with the words, “Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord.” This

* See, for example,*1 Cor. x. 15. Apostle though he was, he bade them judge what he said ; it would be strange if we were to say, “We are successors of the apostles ; judge ye NOT what we say.”

† Luke xii. 57.

‡ 1 Cor. x. 15.

§ 1 John v. 10.

word "mankind" is very notably used here, and elsewhere in the Prayer Book. The Word was made Flesh; all men have part with Him, since all are partakers of that one Flesh. There is no exclusiveness here; there is no sectarianism possible which shall be consistent with such a profession as this.

II. From the *Te Deum*. "Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man."

These are glorious words of praise. Believing this, what does it so greatly signify if our brethren abroad do look coldly upon us and refuse to reckon us within the pale? They cannot prevent us from thinking them our brethren, though they will not call us brethren. They cannot keep us from believing that they shall be saved from their sins even as we. Let them say, "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus" if they will; we say, "Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man;" and it is higher ground to take, and evidences a higher catholicity.* True it is that the *Te Deum* is not ours alone; they, too, say, "*Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem*;" but it is too sadly manifest that this glorious utterance is muffled in the dead language, while those other narrowing words are translated into the vulgar tongue, and come abroad into every-day use. We rejoice to speak the

* St. Paul's words are quoted, *with a parenthesis*, by the author of No. 73 or "Tracts for the Times" (see p. 13), thus: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us" (that is, the Church) "from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 38, 39.) The author of the Tract (No. 73) would, it must be supposed, insist upon his parenthesis now more than when he wrote the Tract. The Church of England glories in St. Paul's words, but has no parenthesis. ;

catholic words in a tongue "understanded of the people." "To deliver man:" a very great work it is to undertake; yet it is not too much to believe that what the Son of God has taken upon Himself He is able to do. David, we remember, took upon himself to slay the Philistine champion. King Saul thought he was not able to do what he undertook; it seemed to him impossible that a shepherd lad could succeed in so very unequal a contest. But David returned with the head of the Philistine in his hand. We rejoice to express our confidence in David's Lord. We do not think He will fail in that which He has taken upon Him. And, therefore, although the sheep may have wandered very far from the fold, we do not believe that it can be ever so lost as to be incapable of being found. For it is the Good Shepherd who is seeking it; it is not an hireling that careth not for the sheep, but the Good Shepherd who gave His life for them. We cannot think that although the piece of silver is lost, it can remain for ever lost in spite of the lighted Divine candle, the sweeping of the house, and the diligent seeking. We think that the Father shall be revealed to the prodigal son, that he who is lost may be found, and he that is dead made alive. We rest upon the words "Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man;" we do not

" . . . faintly trust the larger hope,"*

but forasmuch as He is our hope, our hope is sure and certain. We wait in the patience of hope that evil will be overcome by good.

* In Memoriam, LIV.

III. "The Apostles' Creed." "The Holy Catholic Church." Let these words be compared with a sentence in another part of the Prayer Book: viz., from

IV. "A Collect or Prayer for all conditions of men."
"More especially we pray for the good estate of the Catholick Church; that it may be so guided and governed by Thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life."

If the question be asked, What is the definition of the Catholic Church given by the Church of England? here is our warrant for replying, "All who profess and call themselves Christians." And certainly a more catholic account of the Catholic Church it might seem hard to give. Yet that we do go beyond even this—that we are authorized by the Church's language to do so—will, it is hoped, be shown subsequently. Here, in the meantime, let it be observed, the boundary of catholicity is very wide. There is no anathematizing those who differ from us possible, if we keep to this account of the Church. Attempts at contraction and limitation must be inconsistent with the meaning of a Church whose formularies speak like this. There is nothing of a Pharisaic vaunting of catholicity; no saying, "We thank Thee that we are not as other men are;" we pray for the Catholic Church—that it may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith; we do not say that it has all truth and needs no fresh light. We claim no infallibility, but acknowledge constant and direct dependence upon God.

If by such an understanding of the words of this prayer any violence is done to its meaning, we cannot see it; and no doubt this interpretation is more consistent with the general spirit of the Prayer Book than if the prayer be understood to mean that the Catholic Church is the "way of Truth" into which it is desirable that all Christians should be led.

V. At Morning and Evening Prayer.

"*Priest.*—O God, make clean our hearts within us."

"*Answer.*—And take not Thy Holy Spirit from us."

A clergyman once happened to hear a portion of an open-air address delivered by a Dissenting preacher. It was Sunday morning, and as the preacher spoke, the sweet church bells began to ring. "Ah!" he said, "the church bells! Well—go to Church if you like, but do just remember one thing while you are there. You will hear the clergyman say, 'O God, make clean our hearts within us,' and you are meant to answer, 'And take not Thy Holy Spirit from us;' but mind you don't say that, for maybe you have not *got* the Holy Spirit." Surely the Prayer Book, in this passage, has a more catholic tone than this preacher's advice had. Yet it is to be feared that a great many who use the Prayer Book are more in agreement with the advice given by the preacher to his hearers than with the book. It is evident that the words of the prayer do mean the very thing the preacher thought; they do mean that which he thought false, and therefore objected to. We do take it for granted that the Holy Spirit is in each of us. And here we confess that without the Holy Spirit we should

be without guidance, and lost in following after the devices and desires of our own unclean hearts. We do not believe that God will leave us thus alone, orphaned* and comfortless. "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."† Much more we may be sure that in this prayer we ask according to His will, and that He heareth us. And it is sad that any Churchman should be so inconsistent as to write that we are not at liberty to draw from the "living wells" of the Scriptures "unguided." For certainly, if any are "unguided," they have not the Spirit. But the Church is catholic in this respect, and is in agreement with her Lord, who, speaking to some whom He calls "hypocrites," asks them, "Why even of yourselves judge ye not that which is right?"‡ According to Him, even they had the power to judge, even they were not "unguided," otherwise He would certainly not have blamed them for neglecting to use the power and for wandering out of the way.

VI. Litany. "From envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, good Lord, deliver us."

The use of the word "all" throughout the Litany is quite enough to constitute that portion of our Church Service most truly catholic. It is surely a far better test of the catholicity of the Litany than age. Those who

* John xiv. 18; οὐκ ἀφῆσω ὑμᾶς ὀρφανούς.

† Exodus xiii. 21, 22.

‡ Luke xii. 57, and see v. 56.

know nothing of antiquity can see for themselves how right it is to pray in this general universal way. In this petition, if we can pray sincerely to be delivered from "all uncharitableness," we ask grace to think kindly of all men, and that we may not be without that charity which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," and which "never faileth."*

VII. Litany. "In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our wealth; in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, good Lord, deliver us." Compare with this another part of the Litany—"That it may please Thee to succour, help, and comfort, all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation; We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord."

We honour our Prayer Book by refusing to limit, at the demand of prejudice, the application of the word "all" in these passages. We honour the Book more by ascribing to its words a large universal meaning than by giving them a small limited meaning. If custom and authority bid us be small and limited, we must count custom and authority bad things in so far as they counsel badly. Our Lord told Nicodemus that God loved the world. He did not explain that "the world" means "the elect," and "the elect" a very few out of reprobate millions. And, similarly, we are at liberty to think that in the Litany the word "all" *means* "all." Now we believe that there is "tribulation" in the world to come as well as in this world. But we do not think, unless when we are utterly carnal, that, because it is

* 1 Cor. xiii. 7, 8.

spiritual tribulation, it is any the less real than tribulation in this world. We believe, rather, that it is much more real, far more serious and awful than any of which we have experience here and now. We believe, also, that it is more effectual.* That tribulation is something from which we need deliverance more than we need it in any earthly tribulation. And these petitions of the Litany have a plain recognition of God in this sense as the Father everlasting of our spirits. We are confident that we are asking according to His will, and that He does not forget any of us in tribulation. It appears, then, to be assumed that "the day of judgment" is after the "hour of death." That it will be very long after it, is, no doubt, the common opinion. It is possible to hold that, in the interval between death and judgment, our spirits are not forgotten. But this, perhaps, ought not to be made much of, as "interval" may be quite a meaningless word as applied to things spiritual. But, in any case, we are assured that God cares for the "disembodied" as for the embodied spirits, and deals with them as if they were in their "earthly house of this tabernacle." We know that He is eternally kind and good to the evil, the unjust, and the unthankful. It is, indeed, wonderful that God's children can ever believe in the cessation of God's active and effectual working, and that according to His own nature.

VIII. Litany. "That it may please Thee to give to all nations unity, peace, and concord."

* *Tribulum*, a threshing machine, which, by pressing and bruising the corn, effects the separation of the wheat from its useless surroundings.

"All nations," Greek Christians, Latin Christians, Protestant Christians, and those who are not Christian at all. These words are a recognition of the great truth that Christ has made all those differences—of blood, language, nationality, and the like, of which we are apt to make so much—of little moment. The Apostle Paul tells us that, in the new order of things, "there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free : but Christ is all, and in all."* If He be in all alike, all the characteristics and marks of distinction and separation are necessarily dwarfed and dimmed. All have one great thing in common. That ought to be such a bond of union as to preclude disunion on account of differences which can have no comparison in importance with that great thing. It would be good for us in England if we lived more nearly as we pray in this respect. We are full of what are called "insular prejudices ;" we magnify our own supposed excellences to such an extent as to give foreigners the worst impression of us, while they see how indisposed we are to give them credit for any good. It is a serious national failing, yet we are more disposed to glory in it than be ashamed of it. There is but little feeling, yet, among the nations, of universal brotherhood—not much sign of the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Nations scarcely interest themselves in the affairs of one another, except as to fluctuations in markets and the like. If we are interested in one another's liberty, or good government,

* Col. iii. 11 ; *ὅπου οὐκ ἐστὶν Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομή καὶ ἀκροβυστία, &c.*

or general prosperity, it is because the markets are affected by these things, and we gain or lose money. Such selfish indifference is a national sin, and it is sin of which we in England should be guiltless if we were better Churchmen according to the Litany.

IX. Litany. "That it may please Thee to bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived."

Religious controversy would not be disgraced by so much "bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking," if the true desire of all our hearts could be expressed in these words. There would be no occasion for such an expression as "*Odium Theologicum*." We should give no occasion to blaspheme, and say, "See how these people hate one another." For it cannot be admitted that all which is hated by controversialists is the error denounced by them. Where, then, would be room for all those personalities we meet with in religious articles and speeches; for those unmistakable sneers, and manifestations of what is too often no better than personal spite? There is more than the error hated; we do not love the wanderer while we hate and denounce his wandering. If we did, and if we felt the ground firmer under our own feet, we should certainly be calmer, less vehement, not so loud and angry. It would indeed be well if we prayed this prayer in simplicity and godly sincerity. It is very catholic to pray for *all* who have erred and are deceived. Surely we are catholic in the sight of our Father in heaven if we can pray this prayer. For He does not curse the wanderers from His fold. Is it not better to be catholic in His sight, to be of

one mind with Him, than to be accounted Catholic by anathemas?

X. Litany. "That it may please Thee to have mercy upon all men." Let it be repeated here that "all" means every one. If we mean by "all men" every man on the face of this earth, the prayer is indeed a very catholic one. But an interpretation larger even than this may justly be claimed for the words. We are warranted in understanding "all men" to mean all men, everywhere, in every state. Did not Christ put the Sadducees to silence by reminding them how God had spoken to Moses of Himself, as being the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; not the God of the dead, but the God of the living Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? There were no "dead," "for all live* unto Him." Accordingly, there is no need to fasten ourselves down to understanding "all men" as meaning only men in this world, since we are told thus distinctly of God's interest in "men" when they have left this world and are no more seen. The words of this petition are a development in one direction of the words which Christ taught us to use, "Thy will be done."† St. Paul speaks of "God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."‡ It is no feeble will that we have to do with, not one to be turned aside by difficulties. It is not a will to be vanquished by what we call "impossibilities;" for that word is the expression of a human idea. "They were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

* Luke xx. 38.

† Matt. vi. 10; *Θέλημά.*

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4; *ὅς πάντας ἀνθρώπους θέλει σωθῆναι . . .*

But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.* He could not, in that stage of their knowledge, speak more distinctly to the disciples than this: He beheld them—what a depth of love was in that look! He knew all, and He knew they were not able to bear it: they were then but yet as babes. It is not well that we should pride ourselves upon what we call reverence for the Scriptures, when it is only an uninquiring and unanxious spirit, a slothful abiding in spiritual childhood when we are called to grow up into Christ in all things.†

XI. Ember Week Collect. "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who hast purchased to Thyself an universal Church" . . . —(and in the Litany we have the words, "Thy holy Church universal")—"to those which shall be ordained to any holy function give thy grace and heavenly benediction; that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men." "An universal Church." It is to this expression, still more distinct in our ears than the "catholic Church," that reference was made above in commenting on the last-mentioned words. That we speak in plain English of an universal Church is surely a more reasonable "note of catholicity" than those notes of catholicity and of the Church were which caused such curious searchings of heart at Oxford about the year 1840. We pray to our Father in heaven as the Father of all, and we are confident in Him that His love is not more or less towards us, according as our love is more or less towards

* Matt. xix. 25, 26. †

See Eph. iv. 13—15.

Him. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us."* We do not hold that outward signs and privileges, beautiful buildings and gorgeous apparel, or singing, praying, and preaching, can have any influence upon God in the way of increasing His love and good-will towards men; but we feel that we cannot honour Him too much, and by doing so no doubt we draw more near. But yet as we remember the words of Jesus, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold,"† who have not yet known Him, we rejoice to think that there is a true sense in which all men are of His fold. For the Church is truly universal; and baptism would not make men members of it, unless they were, in a true sense, members of God already. Baptism would not make them God's children unless they were God's children by birth; it but proclaims or reveals them to be such. It marks Christ's sheep with His mark. They could not be marked with His mark unless they belonged to Him; nay, they are His even though they be not marked. And God, whose way is to look to the end, as well as to the beginning and progress of a work, who regards what *we* see but the beginning of, as already completed, who "callesh those things which be not as though they were,"‡ no doubt regards all men, even those who have wandered farthest, and are most ignorant and out of the way, as His own, and as members of His Church, that is, of Himself. They will *manifestly* be made so in that day when "every creature which is in heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in

* 1 John iv. 10.

† John x. 16.

‡ Rom. iv. 17.

the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."* But as yet we see it not. For as yet all things are not put under Christ; but God sees it so, and we, in the assured confidence that His blessed will must be done, do not shrink from counting all men as our brethren now, nor from this understanding of the words "an universal Church," even although as yet the fact is far from universally visible. Millions, as yet, are in great darkness, and know not God. Nevertheless He knows them. When the children of Israel were in misery, when they were unmindful of God through "anguish of spirit and cruel bondage," He knew them, and He was not unmindful of them. He was saying to Moses, "I know their sorrows."† That knowledge of His was not merely a contemplation of His people's misery. Something came of this. His was a practical knowledge, one which eventually resulted in the deliverance of the people with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm. And so it is now, and must be for ever. Though the so-called light places of the earth have much of darkness, (and how great is that darkness!) and though the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty, He knoweth it all, and is saying, "I know your sorrows." Can we not trust Him then and wait? trust that His knowledge is not a mere looking on apart—a mere contemplation from the height of His glory, with a view to vengeance upon the wrong-doers only, but a Father regarding all men as His children, and waiting and seeking to

* Rev. v. 13.

† Exodus iii. 7.

deliver them from evil? We do not always see His working, or only a little of it. Yet, seeing ever so little a glimmer of the dawn, may we not look up and say, The day breaketh? When we are sure that there will be full light, we call the first streak of light, day, though the shadows have scarce begun to flee away. And as we are sure that God's will *shall* be done one day, and sure of His love to all the world, may we not rest in peace? If we are, we may speak of an universal Church undoubtingly. "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Lift up thine eyes round about and see : all they gather themselves together, they come to thee : thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see and flow together, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged ; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."*

The universal Church ! Let us thank God for the words, and for the witness to His truth which He has committed to us in them. "The Church," says St. Paul, "which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."†

And truly, also, the office of the ministers in the Church is greatly magnified, after a wholesome sort, in this Ember Week Prayer. "I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office."‡ All such magnifying of the office of ministers as the apostles, and that of this prayer, "that they may set forward the

* Isaiah lx.

† Eph. i. 22, 23.

‡ Rom. xi. 13.

salvation of all men," is good and wholesome. There is no selfishness in such magnifying, no claim to superiority over their brethren is made for ministers, no wonderful power is claimed as inherent in them as a class or caste; their office is magnified only because of the witness for the goodness of God towards all men that is committed to them. They are mere ministers and stewards, charged with a dispensation of this the good news of God. They are servants sent with a message from God. They are catholic ministers, sent to speak good of God's name, and to gather in all, the bad and the good, for "yet there is room" in the holy Church universal.

Still further, the words "an universal Church" warrant an eventual inclusion for all who are earnest seekers after truth; yea, within that "Church of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth."*

Have some men of science obeyed what seemed truth to them, even if their truth led them into the burning fiery furnace of doubt as to Revelation? Even so. But has God, therefore, given up them? True and excellent we believe to be this conclusion, "I think that to those of us who believe profoundly in the divine government of all spiritual natures—*i.e.*, of all natures willing and eager to submit to God's government, even though *they* do not recognise it as we do, as being God's—the fact (above mentioned) involves no less a conclusion than this, that the fine network of doubts and difficulties, which have occupied so important a place in the religious

* 1 Tim. iii. 15.

history of our time, are themselves instruments of God, intended by Him to effect a great temporary work, and are *not* merely temptations to be overcome, infidelities to be resisted. . . . For my own part, I cannot doubt that all genuine hesitations, difficulties, incredulities of high, disinterested, and truth-loving minds are parts of God's direct teaching to us of to-day, and are likely to do a great work in purifying our Christianity."* . . .

Surely such words commend themselves to us, and help us to thank God anew for the words "an universal Church;" for the idea of a Church in which even those who cannot speak our language as yet, nor give us their presence as yet in His public worship, have yet a real office and ministry among us, of God's tender mercies being over all His works for ever.

XII. "A Prayer that may be said after any of the former."
"O God, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy, and to forgive." . . .

There is a witnessing to the glory of God in these words, for which we cannot be too thankful. God is everlasting; so must His "nature and property" be. He is able to save to the uttermost, or rather, as it is in the margin of our Bible, "evermore."† We ought to compare with the language of this prayer those words in the Litany: "Both now and ever vouchsafe to hear us, O Christ." The priesthood of Christ is magnified in the Epistle to the Hebrews, because it is endless. He is called a "priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the

* Note, Paper No. IV.

† Heb. vii. 25; εἰς τὸ πάντοτε.

power of an endless life.”* There were many priests under the old law, “because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death ; but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save for evermore.”† . . . His priesthood is endless, and His salvation is the one salvation. There is no virtue in doubting that His healing can be applied evermore, nor that the Almighty Father is able to show evermore “to them that be in error the light of His truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness.”‡

XIII. “A Collect or Prayer for all conditions of men.”
 “O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech Thee for all sorts and conditions of men, that Thou wouldest be pleased to make Thy ways known unto them, Thy saving health unto all nations.” . . .

The way in which the catholic Church is spoken of in this prayer has been already remarked on ; and the introductory part of the prayer is now quoted only that the exceedingly *public* character of it may not be passed over. We say, “all mankind,” “all sorts and conditions of men,” “all nations.” For such wealth of catholic expression, such a luxuriance of speaking good of our God, in attributing to Him a care for all, we may well be thankful. And it would be well to pray that we come not short of the spirit of our prayer by narrow and uncharitable thoughts of men, and so of God ; for “he that loveth not his brother whom

* Heb. vii. 15, 16.

† Heb. vii. 23—25.

‡ Collect for third Sunday after Easter.

he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"*

XIV. "A general Thanksgiving." "Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we bless Thee, above all, for Thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ."

What is Redemption? The apostolic answer is, "The forgiveness of sins."† The plain teaching of the Church is, then, forgiveness. But we are not all true to our Church in this respect, if we may judge from very many sermons and religious publications. It is very often taught that God exercises a special act of forgiveness upon our going through certain mental processes, such as believing and repenting. Such is not God's order, which, however, the Prayer Book preserves; for here we are taught to thank Him that He has forgiveness for the world. The order is—first,‡ love and forgiveness on God's part; then, on our part, love, and hatred of sin, and repentance, and so that "utter abolishing of the whole body of sin" spoken of in the Baptismal Service. It is no small thing for our soul's health to hold fast to this order. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." We must not think of extracting benefits from a Being reluctant to bestow, nor of claiming, by having fulfilled certain requirements, a blessing from God. It is eternally impossible to repent *in order to* be forgiven, or to believe for this, or any, *purpose*.

It would not be difficult to produce other sentences of the Prayer Book which appear to contradict the sense given

* 1 John iv. 20.

† Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14.

‡ John iv. 19.

to some of the extracts made in this paper; and here is a case in point—the “Absolution” might occur to anybody who reads what is here said about repenting and believing *for a purpose*. There we have the words, “He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel.” These words might perhaps be taken to imply that God does not pardon until we repent and believe. But however we understand the words, it is obviously true that repentance for a purpose is a repentance that needeth to be repented of. There is nothing of *μετάνοια* about it; there is no change of mind possible, except on conviction that the old state of mind was bad in itself. And evidently belief for a purpose is an impossible belief. The only way in which it can be right to understand the absolution is this—“The Gospel, or good news of God, when received by men, opens their eyes to God’s forgiveness.” The confusion is necessarily terrible when we put our repentance and our faith first, and then, as a reward from God, His pardon. Our apprehension of God’s love, or faith, and our repentance, are inseparable and simultaneous. Forgiveness has come to be spoken of in two ways: (1) God’s good will towards us, His character, love; and (2) our apprehension of that will and character. But the love *is* whether we apprehend it or not; whether we believe and repent or not. To us His forgiveness assumes *reality* when we see Him to be what He tells us He is; when we take Him at His word,—just as light is light, but is light to those who have been blind, only when their eyes are opened.

XV. Collect for the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany. "O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil." Such is the witness of the Prayer Book and of the Apostle John.* For this purpose the Son of God was manifested. Is it not very strange that we can make up our minds to the triumph of evil and sin, and to the failure of the declared purpose of Almighty God? It does seem strange that men can care to worship a God who cannot do according to His purpose. If, indeed, we believe that His purpose, as set forth by the Church and the disciple whom Jesus loved, shall not fail, but that the word going out of His mouth shall prosper, then is the worship of our Almighty Father a reasonable service. It is no godliness, but the opposite of godliness—pure unmixed selfishness—to serve Him because we have recognised Him, and to be careless, or to suppose He is, of our brethren.

XVI. Collect for Ash-Wednesday. "Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made." Here we have another witnessing to the universal and everlasting love of God. That which we think it right to ascribe to Him now, we must needs think it right to ascribe to Him for ever; for He changeth not. God is love; He hateth nothing that He hath made. He does not change to hatred: what He loves once, He loves for ever, else He would be wrong in His first love; and who shall dare to imagine this? Yet, alas! He knows how this testimony to the glory of His character is too much for many of us.

* 1 John iii. 8.

It seems as though we "could not see for the glory of the light." The light is too strong for us; it makes us blink.* Do we love the darkness better? Does it seem better to us to think evil of God? does the thought of His condemning men to everlasting sin, a thought which honours Him more, than the assured confidence that such cannot be His will now, and can never be at any time?

XVII. Collect for the Sunday next before Easter. "Almighty and everlasting God, who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility." . . .

The Collect of which these words are the beginning is the one appointed to be used in Passion-week, or Holy-week, the most solemn week in the year, when the death of our Lord is sought to be impressed upon us by daily readings of those Scriptures in which the fullest accounts of that death and all its circumstances are given at length. The purpose to be accomplished by that death is set forth in the words of this prayer in a very remarkable way; and the language used is very strikingly different from that which is too common in sermons and religious books concerning this great thing. We too often hear and read that Christ came between His Father and us, in order to bear the wrath with which His Father would otherwise have destroyed us. His Father, it seems to be said, must have some victim, and He was willing to accept the guiltless Jesus

* 2 Pet. i. 9; *μυωπάων*—*μν ὡψ*, closing the eyes, short-sighted.

in the place of guilty men. That there is truth beneath this, is not denied ; but the evil of pressing such statements in their crude state is fearful. Such teaching, beginning from a germ of truth, has often, contrary to nature, grown into a tree the very shade of which is poisonous. Men are unintentionally compelled to blaspheme through being brought up with false thoughts of God. Many do not think of Him as the loving Father of all, but as an angry, vindictive, all-powerful Being, a God of vengeance, to whom it is indifferent whether the vengeance is wreaked on the innocent or the guilty, provided only it is wreaked. It is a fact that the Son of God has been represented as addressing His Father,—“You shall not reach them (men) except through my dead body.” It may be admitted that there is an *extremity* of coarseness and blasphemy in this ; but the tree which bears such fruit must be judged by its fruit, and let us fear and tremble, therefore, even at a tendency which can lead to anything so horrible. This is to ascribe to the Father a mind and heart set on blood ; and to make a Baal* of God. It is quite true that there is a sense in which it is right to call the great Sacrifice Vicarious. Inasmuch as the man Christ Jesus does for His brother men that which by ourselves we cannot do, and gives Himself to His Father and our Father, in order that we also may offer ourselves, body and spirit, to our Father, to do His will, His sacrifice was Vicarious, and as such is recognised in this Collect, and in the first Collect for Good Friday and others. But it is awful indeed what

* 1 Kings xviii. 28.

men have done to make void the counsel of God, and to darken the blessed Light of the world, and, as far as in them lay, to make those words of truth untrue : "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me,"* by making God repulsive.

XVIII. The third Collect for Good Friday. "O merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that Thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live ; have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics." . . .

Who is Churchman enough for the Prayer Book? All party names are thoroughly objectionable, but such words as these seem to suggest a specific objection to the way in which people speak of "High Churchmen." If such an expression be fitting at all, surely it is more characteristic of those who rejoice in the high testimony to God's glory which is borne by the Church, than of those who profess unlimited rubrical obedience? It would surely seem that the doctrine of this Collect is far too high for many of us. The idea of a God who does not hate infidels and heretics is too high for us ; we cannot attain to it. For it is evident, as it has been remarked before, that we do hate them, and seek to do them evil and cut them off from our body. Do we say, "So would St. Paul do?" Let it be asked, then, Have we St. Paul's reasons? When we would "deliver unto Satan,"† is it always in order that (*iva*) some good may come to those whom we would so deliver, that anything answering to their "spirits being saved in the day of the

* St. John xii. 32.

† 1 Cor. v. 5.

Lord Jesus" may happen to them? When any of our brethren have, as we think, "concerning faith made shipwreck,"* would we deliver them to Satan simply, or, as St. Paul did, "that (*iva*) they may learn not to blaspheme?" Are we not conscious of vengeance in our hearts which we would pour out on the heretics, more than of any longing for their correction?

XIX. "The Order for the Burial of the Dead." "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of His great mercy to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself."

It is very sad to think that there is no part of the Prayer Book which some ministers who use it object to more than this. Not long ago it was declared with some authority, that in consequence of the charitable and universal hope of mercy which the Burial Service pronounces over the departed, there were circumstances under which nothing could induce the speaker to read it.† Such language may be taken to mean that if a man died in the commission of deadly sin, or had lived a godless life, and died, notori-

* 1 Tim. i. 19, 20.

† Quoted in a pamphlet of the Dean of Westminster, containing his speech in Convocation, June 29, 1866. See p. 55, *note*.

ously, a godless death, such words as those of the Burial Service ought not to be said at the grave in which his body was placed. But, thank God, the Prayer Book gives us warrant for the charitable and universal hope so much objected to. How comes it that we do not glory in such an expression of loving-kindness to men, and in such a token of trust in God? Even if the child has been a prodigal son, one who has denied his Father from first to last in this world ; even if he has spent his life in hard service of the devil instead of in the perfect freedom to which he was called ; what then? Is he, therefore, not the child of his Father? Does the parting of soul and body involve the disruption of that relationship which we are certainly taught to believe everlasting? May we not trust the Father of spirits there, as well as say, here in this world, Our Father? Surely any objection to this part of the Burial Service is to be accounted for by our foolishly thinking that God is altogether such as we are.* We measure His thoughts by our own, forgetting that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts.† We go hence and are no more seen ; and when we are no more seen, the bodies with which we were clothed are buried, and those we leave behind are apt to forget us. And is He like us that He should forget? Nay—"they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."‡ Yet do we by no means wish to make light of sin. God, and God only, knoweth how to deal with it, and what award to give it. But this we must leave to Him,

* Psalm l. 21.

† Isaiah lv. 8, 9.

‡ Isaiah xlix. 15.

trusting that, if possible, it is but for correction, and not for destruction.

XX. Communion Service: The Collect. "Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee," &c. See also Collect for Fifth Sunday after Easter: "O Lord, from whom all good things do come; grant to us Thy humble servants, that by Thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by Thy merciful guiding may perform the same," &c. Also, Collect for Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity: "O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee: Mercifully grant, that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts," &c.

Such language as this, it has often been remarked, shows how very different a view of Inspiration is presented to us in the Prayer Book from that which is too commonly insisted on. And surely it is a far higher thought of Inspiration to believe of it that it has not ceased, but still will have its way in all the hearts of men who "quench not the Spirit." Undoubtedly some men have been, and some men are still, more inspired than others. But then this is in general mainly because they have more honestly listened to His Spirit, and have recognised the worth of God's guidance more fully, and have held His teaching to be so holy and pure and lovely as to compel them to count all things else but loss. Surely we are in danger of speaking against the Holy Spirit when we say that His Inspiration came to a positive and definite close

eighteen hundred years ago. Most certainly, no countenance to such a thought is given in the three Collects quoted here. But it is very strange how in this, as in other questions, any word about extension of the grace of God is apt to be looked upon as heretical. It is just as though the fulness of God were not fulness. We think it needs to be jealously guarded and limited. We are apt to think of the grace of God as the widow of Zarephath thought of the "handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse." * There was not enough for the prophet, she thought, only a very little for herself and her son. Yet the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail. Or we think as the disciples did of the five barley loaves—"What are they among so many?" Inspiration has been too often held to have been exhausted, as it were, by the prophets and apostles; but do we not honour God more by believing that yet, even now, the Spirit breatheth where He will, and we hear His voice, though we cannot tell whence He cometh nor whither He goeth? Is it not well to say with the Church that every good thought in every man is from God, and that all right guidance in all things is His alone?

XXI. Communion Service. "When he (the minister) delivereth the bread to any one, he shall say, 'The Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee.'

"And the minister that delivereth the cup to any one shall say, 'The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was

* 1 Kings xvii. 12.

shed for thee Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee.' "

It would be difficult to find any more direct and individualising way of preaching the Gospel than we have in these words. Four times to each single person kneeling before the Table are the words "for thee" said. There seems to be a very special emphasizing of the fact that the benefit of the Lord's death is something applying with the utmost certainty to each separate soul. There is an absence of any doubt, or condition, or hesitation. Now, speaking practically, it is almost impossible to exclude "any one" from the Lord's Table. Such exclusion is almost utterly unknown. One instance of it will not occur to the recollection of one clergyman in a hundred. And this is a cause for thankfulness ; for all excommunication is surely objectionable. Whatever a man has been, or is, if he comes and kneels down at that Table, it cannot be wrong to give him this assurance, God's welcome—for we must believe that he is sincere. If he is a mocker, God is his judge ; the Church does her part, however, in presenting the Gospel to him. If it be nothing to him—a mockery to him—he is sinning in ignorance ; he knows not what he does ; he shows a want of appreciation. Yet let him "draw near ;" it may be that the goodness of which he has known nothing hitherto will become plain to him in the ordinance. It is possible that Christ may become known to him in the breaking of bread. The words that are spoken to each communicant are true words : why should they not be spoken ? Here is none of the spiritual bribing that is sometimes met with—"Believe—repent—and you will get to

heaven ;" but a certain great fact is sought to be impressed upon each one kneeling there, and it is left to work like leaven. The Prayer Book way is thus the more excellent way of preaching the Gospel of God ; and because it is a more excellent way, it seems difficult to regret that excommunication has become as good as impossible in England. Let every man "draw near ;" let the bad and the good come to the feast ; it may be that the goodness therein set forth shall work effectually ; it may be that the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. If any come without the wedding garment, let the King, who sees the guests, judge him. He will judge better than we can ; He is able to make him understand the "for thee" which we speak in vain. If the outer darkness be best for him, the King will send him there ; we have not discernment like His, and we ought not to regret that such authority as His can be exercised by us no more. Yet is a faithful priest to forbid all in whom evil living is notorious to come. This is necessary for the sake of others as well as his own.

XXII. Communion Service. "Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty."

This is thanksgiving indeed. Would to God there were much more of the spirit of it among us, and less thought of our privileges and good things, whether held in right of the Church or not ! Would to God that the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him were everything to us ! If we could but cease from our fight-

ings without and fears within ; if we could say of all such things, " It is our own infirmity : we will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High : " we will leave the trifles behind, we will cease from all quibblings and stirring up of malice by non-essential disputings ; we will forget the things that are behind and reach forth unto the things before, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus ; we will seek first, really first, before all cares and anxieties whatsoever,—of this life, or this Church, or nation, or even of the life to come,—the kingdom of God and His Righteousness, and we will give Him thanks for His great glory, which it has pleased Him to reveal unto us !

* * * * *

It is not thought that the extracts above given from the Prayer Book are by any means all that could be found bearing on the same subject. But they are surely enough for the purpose of showing that the Church speaks of God as our Universal Father, and calls all men to His and Her embraces.

Does not the way in which the words " catholic " and " catholicity " have been used in the preceding pages seem more worthy of us as God's children, than any other way of considering these words ? Here they have been used as really meaning " universal " and " universality," whereas any other way makes them but a technical description of beliefs which cannot be tested or made true by this nomenclature. In this latter sense the words are used freely, no doubt, in England. And the glory of the Church of England would, by many, be held to be that she holds " the kernel

of evangelical truth in the shell of apostolic order." But testing Catholicity by order, it would surely appear that the order is more than the truth. Yet surely the kernel is more than the shell, for inasmuch as if it had not been for the truth there could be no order. And order is not the test of truth. Yet it is evidently made so, judging from what we see and hear. We see overtures made to the Greek Church, and hankerings after the Roman Church, both of which are thought to have the apostolic order, but scarcely the evangelical truth, or, at all events, a great deal which annuls it. And we do not all seem to desire the same union with fellow-Christians at home, although it is allowed that they have more of the truth, though less of the order. It would seem, then, that order is reckoned to be more than truth, the shell more than the kernel. Accordingly, we see Anglicans crossing the sea for catholicity, while our Nonconforming brethren seek for unity of spirit in visible disunion. We may well apply St. Paul's quotation of a passage in Deuteronomy to what we see going on amongst us: "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? or, Who shall descend into the deep?" (there is no need, for) "the word is very nigh thee."* True catholicity is, however, neither beyond the sea, that we should say Who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us? neither is it in sects as such; but it is very nigh us, and its spirit is breathed in such language as is contained in the extracts from the Prayer Book which have been given above, and in such-like. The Word is very nigh us; it is in our mouths con-

* Rom. x. 6—8; from Deut. xxx. 11—14.

stantly—would to God it were nigher still, and in our hearts always, the eternal Spirit of love, and patience, and truth !

If it be objected that the use made in this paper of the words “catholic” and “catholicity” is to be accounted for either because the writer does not understand the words, or uses them dishonestly, the answer is, that the words are not indeed used in a technical, but in a much higher, although also literal sense. Usually, or commonly, as has been said, the words are employed to denote an attribute of a certain body of Christians, of Christians tested by an outward mark—a ministry which has what is called an apostolic succession ; yet have they by no means all one doctrine. Of what use is this order, then ? And what does it mean ? It has been here sought to show that we may claim in the use of the word Catholic a greater thing ; namely, the kernel of evangelical, all-embracing, universal truth, and may treat as a secondary thing the different “shells of apostolic order.” The life is more than meat, and the body than raiment.

No better reason for the existence of Order can be given than the principle given by Moses to the children of Israel. “When thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you ? then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh’s bondmen in Egypt ; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.”* The great object of the Church is to be a witness of doctrine, of the doctrine of Redemption.

* Deut. vi. 20, 21. See also Exodus xii. 26, &c. ; xiii. 8, &c. ; and in Deut. v. 15 we have redemption from Egypt specially assigned as a reason for keeping the Sabbath

So far as a Church fulfils this object she is a true Church ; so far as she darkens counsel herein, she is no true Church. We are "Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt" when our knowledge of God is false and unworthy, or limited more than it must necessarily be by our limited faculties. We are then in bondage, we are slaves, we fear,† we are not made perfect in love, and our fear hath torment.‡ But if we think nothing but good of God, if we glory in the message that He is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all ; if, because He is Love, we love Him with all our heart and soul and strength and mind, then the slavish tormenting fear is cast out, and we can look with open face upon our Father, and are no more slaves, but sons. Then we are not compelled and "hasted" by a taskmaster, but choosing to serve, we are obedient willingly, with a service which is perfect freedom. As for anything but free service, be it far from us ! We run the way of His commandments because He hath set at liberty our hearts.§ We do not sin because grace abounds.

Now, it seems that the "testimonies and the statutes and the judgments" which we in the Church of England have received to hold, and of which the teaching has been sought to be indicated in this paper, do set forth this glory of God. But let the testimony on one or two more points be emphasized.

Firstly, as regards the dealings of God with men in

day. Of course this reason applies to the whole of the commandments (Deut. v. 6 ; Exod. xx. 2), and it is much to be regretted that, while it is inserted in the Catechism, it should have been omitted in the beginning of the Communion Service.

† Matt. xxv. 24, 25 : "I was afraid."

‡ 1 John iv. 18, 19.

§ See Bible and Prayer Book versions of Psalm cxix. 32.

another state of being, it has been assumed that we are at liberty to interpret the Prayer Book words as teaching that there are such dealings on His part. It has not been said that we are able to understand that working. When Jesus spoke of His resurrection, the disciples, in their ignorance, disputed among themselves as to what the rising from the dead should mean. And although we know, better than the apostles then knew, how Jesus meant His own resurrection, still we do not know what the rising from the dead is. But although our knowledge is as nothing, and though we are quite unable to comprehend St. Paul's words about "a spiritual body," still we "believe in the resurrection of the body." We feel, as Christians, that St. Paul's question was unanswerable, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that *God* should raise the dead?"* Is not the same kind of question as unanswerable with regard to its future? Why should it be thought a thing incredible with us that the Father of spirits should *be* their Father, in "loving correction" and chastening, and in manifestation of Himself? We do not know how He raises the dead, nor what is meant by a "spiritual body;" but we believe in that rising and in that body. We know not how the Father of spirits deals with them, but that is no reason why His love to them and His everlasting dealing with them in love should be thought a thing incredible. God is love, and His love being believed, nothing ought to be believed impossible to love. Surely, "every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked

* Acts xxvi. 8.

shall be made straight, and the rough places plain : and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." With Him are the refiner's fire, and the fuller's soap, and the hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces. Delilah bound Samson with green withes, and with new ropes, but he brake the withes as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire, and he brake the ropes from off his arms like a thread. How is it possible that we can presume to gauge the strength of our God, and imagine Him becoming weak and unable to do as it pleaseth Him? or that His love will fall? The strange jealousy with which objections are made against His continuance in love and strength to work. His will has been alluded to above. How like such objections are to that jealous complaining on the part of the labourers in the vineyard of our Lord's parable! It is so strange that we should fancy His love diminished, when we know that His love is boundless and everlasting ; it is strange that it should be thought there is a measure of injustice to, and forgetfulness of, those who are " ever with " Him, because He rejoices over the prodigal ! But, strange as it may seem, it is done, and men yet imitate the elder son of the parable. " Now his elder son was in the field : and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come ; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in." Even so we see grievous offence sometimes taken at the expression of hope for our

prodigal brethren, or of trust in the continuance of the Father's love to them. It seems as though "the voice of harpers harping with their harps," and the echoes of the angels' songs of joy over lost sinners' repentance, were sounds against which we would fain stop our ears. We are angry, and will not go in. It does not seem our Father's house to us if he who has devoured his living with harlots be admitted there. We murmur against the goodman of the house and say, "These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day." Does not the answer come to us, "I will give unto this last even as unto thee? Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"* The father would correct the unworthy jealousy of his elder son, and would lift up his thought to conformity with his own higher thought. He says: "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." Surely, in this word of our Saviour Jesus, "It was meet,"† is set forth to us a heavenly and eternal principle. But no doubt the jealousy has a true root in the feeling of the exceeding sinfulness and deep difficulty of the cure of sin, and in this sense it must be borne with.

2. The fact that God is our Father has been made much of. It has often been said that we can make too much of the Fatherliness of God, and that to magnify His Fatherhood tends to the weakening and emasculation of religion. To

* Matt. xx. 12 and 14, 15. The connection of the last words of v. 16 with what goes before is rather puzzling. These words have no place in the most authoritative MSS.

† 88a. Luke xv. 32.

speak of love, it is said, makes us forget justice. But those who think so mistake the true nature of love. It never could be said unless those who say it started with a defective notion of that which is fatherly. If a father be not just, he is not a good father ; if he lets his children please themselves and indulge in selfishness and folly, he is no good father ; if he shows favouritism, by being kind to one child and oppressive to another, he is no true father. And there is no room for the idea of perfect love if perfect justice be left out of sight ; for then love degenerates into weak, indulgent partiality. The great function (if we may say so) of love is to make its objects good, worthy, just. And if love be thought incompatible with severity, it is only because we have a thoroughly unworthy conception of love. We are using our poor indulgent partiality as the measure of perfect love. There is no partiality in that love, no mercy to sin ; it is utterly relentless to sin ; it must be so for ever and ever, bent and ever be bent on its destruction. Though God is merciful, and gracious, and long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, He therefore by no means clears the guilty : He at no time passes over sin as though it mattered not. If He could do so, we should not have true love or reverence for Him. God can never treat sin except as that which He hates utterly ; He can make no terms whatever with sin ; and this is a truth full of most real comfort for all sinners. " Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity ? . . . He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us : He will subdue our iniquities, and Thou wilt cast all their sins

into the depths of the sea."* In this same passage it is said of God that He "passeth by" transgression; but how? Plainly by subduing it, by abolishing it. He does this, however, in a way of His own. He overcomes evil with good; yet He gives remedies of correction which are severe: remedy on remedy until sin is abandoned. We dare not ask for mercy on sin, in the sense of no notice being taken of it. It is to be hoped that we desire none. Such is a "looking back" and a sign of unfitness for the kingdom of God. In that kingdom is no mercy for ever for sin. Just because there is infinite mercy for sinners, there is infinite wrath against sin. We pray the Father to "purely purge away the dross;" but we must not pray Him to quench the purifying fire until all the dross is gone. If we cannot say, "Thy will be done," herein, nevertheless that will shall be done. The Father's love will not quench that fire, that fire which consumes the dross, and burns up the chaff unquenchably until it is consumed. For only fine gold will content the Pure and Holy One; only wheat without the chaff will satisfy the good Husbandman. So even as the fire on Mount Horeb did not consume the bush, so the purifying fire does not *consume* the fine gold. If there be no gold, nothing but dross, then indeed there is no hope. But cannot the righteous Father discern gold where we see nought but dross? The more nearly that sin cleaves to us, the more terrible must the purifying fire seem. There is no wish to diminish aught from that "terror of the Lord." But we must be jealous for Him that His name be not blasphemed, that we may not believe, nor teach men so,

* Micah vii. 18, 19.

that He can change, and cease to love His children. Justice and love are one. Well might an everlasting horror of great darkness settle over us if it were not so. But even as an earthly father's desire for his child must be that child's good, so, much more, is it our Heavenly Father's will that none of His children should perish. Blessed be that name of Father ! While it is His name, it must be eventually well with His children surely.

3. Let a protest already made be repeated here. We are at liberty to hold parts of the Prayer Book in higher esteem than we hold other parts ; just as not many who deserve to be listened to will deny our right to hold some parts of our Bible in higher esteem than other parts. And it would be a mistake, through supposed loyalty to the Church, to seek to show that by some passages of the Prayer Book the teaching advanced in these pages may appear to be contradicted. For the teaching of the passages here quoted is of a higher order, and is the *general* teaching of the Prayer Book. And the words are worthy words, worthy even for a mother's lips. It would be possible to collect passages of the Prayer Book which seem to teach a smaller and poorer thing. Some such words may even be found at times on a mother's lips ; but the mother is not known by these.

If, indeed, it could be ruled that the clergy of the Church must understand her formularies in some limited sense,—a ruling which should also involve the rejection of all fresh light, and the denial of the continuance of the teaching of the Spirit,—one thing must follow, that an engine for the destruction of the Church of England had been devised by the making of such a rule. And thousands would then be

forced out of office and ministry from time to time ; for we should have to stand by the words of those who lived long ago, the perfectness and literal exactness of whose books, written with ink and pen, can never fully express or supersede the constant and accurate teaching of the living God. Happily such an obligation is impossible.

The Church speaks good of the Father because we are capable of discerning good. The Church does not seek to give us repellent accounts of holy things ; she speaks to her children in a reasonable and attractive way. There is no puzzling of her children with systems full of difficulties against which our God-given reason revolts. There is no demand made upon mere assent. She does not teach that the more we assent to things incredible, and the more we disclaim all right and power to judge for ourselves, the better and holier we shall be. No such bondage is required of us. We claim to be that which God made us, not slaves who know not what their lord doeth, but friends who have been taken into God's council, to whom it pleaseth Him to make known His will and purpose more and more as we are able to bear it. We are not slaves, but sons. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us (and this is the manner), that we should be called the sons of God ! Shall we come down then from the high place to which our Father has seen fit to call us, and say, with false humility, " We are not worthy ; we must give up such position, we must repudiate it ? We must be humble, and not think to hear the Father's voice ourselves, but stand afar off, and receive such message from the lips of others, a message less certain than the records. It will be safer for us to trust the record, and to let its light

shine into our hearts. It is good to be safe, good to cast our responsibility upon others. But is this safe in truth?

No such blind bondage is required of us. We are free. Let us take heed how we despise this freedom, and trample this God's pearl under our feet, and turn to rend that which the hand of God has been holding out to us, and yet holds in the witness of His universal love. Let us be warned against saying, "We cannot hear, we cannot see," when God gives us ears to hear, and eyes to see. May His grace be with us to enable us to stand fast in this liberty wherewith He has made us free, that we be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage; and may our eyes be opened and our hearts enlarged to see and receive the good words concerning our Father spoken to us by His Church; His, because so speaking! To her, in so far as she speaks good of Him, and not otherwise, we may apply the Apostle's words, and bless God for that which is ours in her, for our "Jerusalem" which is from above, and the "Mother of us all."

P.S.—It may be thought that the writer of the above is somewhat indefinite in not setting forth a more "dogmatic teaching" for the Church. But it is probable that his meaning is not that the Church is without dogmata; but that the first is this, that God is our Father; and the second, that all men are our brethren; and that this is her chief mission and message as the spouse of Christ, the Son of the Father, who is God over all, blessed for ever."

A. E., Bp.

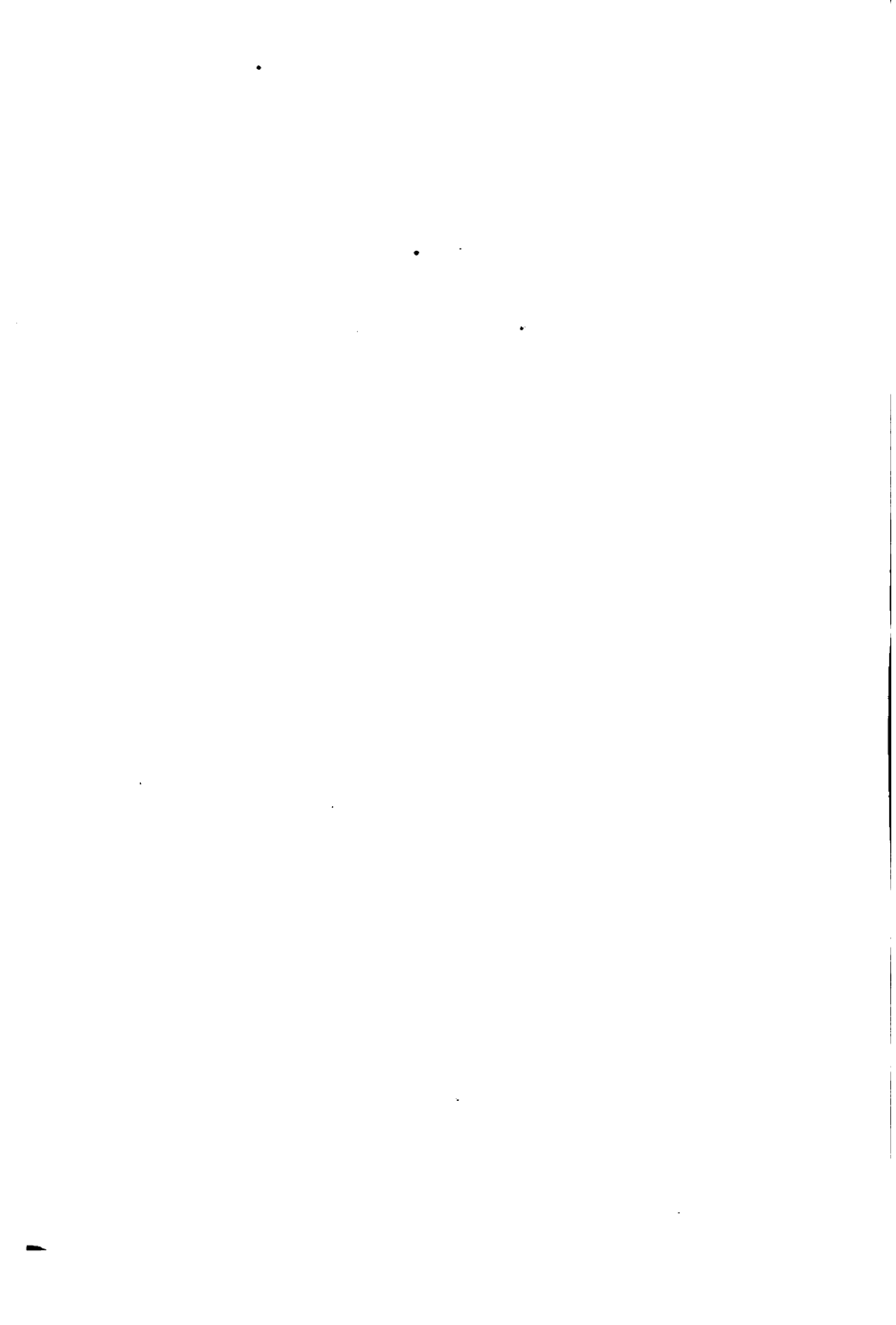
*PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS
IN THEOLOGY*



USE OF THE WORD REVELATION
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

By

John Frederick Dawson Professor.



USE OF THE WORD REVELATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.



IN an advertisement prefixed to these Tracts Revelation is said to mean the giving of light, or the removal of a veil. That sense, however accordant with the obvious etymology of the word, has been said to be inconsistent with the reverence which we owe to the Scriptures. Modern usage has determined that the name shall denote the lessons which we receive from the Bible, as contrasted with those which we receive from the natural world, or from our own conscience and reason. To depart from that usage is, it is said, to show that we do not care for the testimony of the Bible; that we wish to substitute for it some theories or conclusions of our own.

There is but one way, I think, of ascertaining whether these charges or suspicions are well founded. Let us turn to the testimonies of the Bible. Let us see whether they recognise the force which is given to Revelation by those who argue about the evidences of natural and revealed religion; whether they prove this to be the sacred—the

one which the Editor of these Tracts has accepted to be a profane—explanation of the phrase.

I propose to enter upon this inquiry. I will enumerate the passages in the New Testament in which the word occurs, suppressing none on the plea that it is unimportant. I will call attention to all cases of the substantive “Revelation,” and all moods and tenses of the verb “reveal.” I will point out every instance in which our translators have given some other equivalent for the original substantive ἀποκάλυψις, or for the cognate verb, as well as every instance in which they have introduced the English word without authority from the Greek. Then I will make a few remarks on the evidence which the reader has had the opportunity of considering for himself.

ST. MATTHEW.

The word ἀποκάλυψις does not occur in this Gospel. The verb corresponding to it is found in these four passages:—

Ch. x. 26. “Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, which shall not be *revealed*; nor hidden, which shall not be known.”

Ch. xi. 25. “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast *revealed* them unto babes.”

Ch. xi. 27. “All things are delivered to me of my

Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will *reveal* him."

Ch. xvi. 17. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not *revealed* it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

ST. LUKE.

Ch. ii. 32. The first use of the substantive in the New Testament is to be found in this verse. What we render "a light to lighten the Gentiles" is, a light for the revelation or unveiling of the nations, *φῶς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν ἔθνων*. It should be observed that the participle which we translate "revealed" in the 26th verse is *κεχρηματισμένον*, a word wholly different in origin and signification.

Ch. ii. 35. "That the thoughts of many hearts may be *revealed*."

Ch. x. 21. The corresponding words to those in St. Matthew xi. 25, quoted before, "Thou hast *revealed* them to babes."

Ch. x. 22. The corresponding words to those in St. Matthew xi. 27, "To whom the Son will *reveal* Him."

Ch. xii. 2. Corresponding words to those in St. Matthew x. 26, "Nothing covered, which shall not be *revealed*."

Ch. xvii. 30. "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is *revealed*."

ST. JOHN.

There is only one example of the word in St. John's

Gospel, and that is taken from Isaiah (apparently a quotation from the Septuagint). It occurs in

Ch. xii. 38. "Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been *revealed*?"

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

Ch. i. 17, 18. "For therein is the righteousness of God *revealed* from faith to faith: as it is written, The just (or righteous) man shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is *revealed* from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold (or hold down) the truth in unrighteousness."

Ch. ii. 5. "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and *revelation* of the righteous judgment of God."

Ch. viii. 18, 19. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be *revealed* in us."

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the *revelation* of the sons of God." (Our translators have "manifestation.")

Ch. xvi. 25. "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the *revelation* of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began."

I CORINTHIANS.

Ch. i. 7. "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for

the 'coming' (a careless rendering of *τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν*) of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Our translators inserted in the margin—Gr. revelation.)

Ch. ii. 10. "But God hath *revealed* them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Ch. iii. 13. "For the day shall declare it, for it shall be (or is) *revealed* in fire."

Ch. xiv. 6. "Now, brethren, if I come speaking to you with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by *revelation*, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?"

26. "How is it then, my brethren? when you come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a *revelation*, hath an interpretation."

30. If anything be *revealed* to another that sitteth by, let the first keep silence."

2 CORINTHIANS.

Ch. xii. 1. "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory: I will come to visions and *revelations* of the Lord."

7. "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the *revelations*, there was given me a thorn in the flesh."

GALATIANS.

Ch. i. 12. "For I neither received it (the Gospel) nor learnt it of men, but by (the) *revelation* of Jesus Christ."

15, 16. "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to *reveal* His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

Ch. ii. 2. "And I went up by *revelation*, and communicated with them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles."

Ch. iii. 23. "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be *revealed*."

EPHESIANS.

Ch. i. 17. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and *revelation* in the knowledge of Him."

Ch. iii. 2—5. "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by *revelation* He made known unto me the mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now *revealed* unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit."

PHILIPPIANS.

Ch. iii. 15. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall *reveal* even this unto you."

2 THESSALONIANS.

Ch. i. 7. "And to you which are troubled rest, when

the Lord Jesus shall be *revealed* (Gr. in the *revelation* of the Lord Jesus) from heaven with mighty angels."

Ch. ii. 3. "Except there shall come a falling away first, and the Man of Sin shall be *revealed*."

6. "And now ye know what hindereth that he shall be *revealed*."

8. "And then shall that wicked be *revealed*, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming (appearing.)"

I ST. PETER.

Ch. i. 5. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be *revealed* in the last time."

7. "In the *revelation* of Jesus Christ."

12. "Unto whom it was *revealed*, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into."

13. "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the *revelation* of Jesus Christ."

Ch. iv. 13. "But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be *revealed* (Gr. in the *revelation* of His glory), ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

Ch. v. 1. "The elders I exhort, who am also an elder,

and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be *revealed*."

REVELATION.

Ch. i. 1. "The *Revelation* of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him."

If I have overlooked any place in which any case of the substantive, or any tense of the verb occurs, I shall be thankful to be informed of it. In the meantime, I will examine those which I have collected.

I.

There is something in the grandeur and universality of the sentence, "Nothing is *covered* which shall not be uncovered; nothing is hidden which shall not be known," that must strike one who attaches no special dignity to the utterer of it. To those who think that it came from the Son of Man and the Son of God, the Judge of the Earth, it must sound very awful. Yet it was spoken—the Evangelist tells us—for consolation. The Apostles who were going forth with a Gospel of the kingdom of Heaven to their countrymen would be taken for ministers of the kingdom of Hell. Their Master had been called Beelzebub; how could his household be treated otherwise? But they were not to fear. The truth would be unveiled. What He was, what they were, would be known one day. The promise of such a Revelation lies at the root of all our Lord's teachings, of all His warnings, of all His encouragements.

II.

"I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent; that thou hast revealed them unto babes." "No man knoweth the Son save the Father, nor the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." Both St. Matthew and St. Luke, we have seen, bring these two sentences together. If the first belongs to a thanksgiving, the second to a discourse, the thanksgiving and the discourse blend with each other; the Evangelists could not separate them. The Son blesses the Father that things which were not discovered to doctors of the law, to the wise and prudent men who thought they were in possession of the light, were discovered to the babes—to those who being in darkness cried for light. To them the Father revealed their secret Teacher; the source of Light. The Father! but who was He? Who could tell except that Teacher, that source of Light? Who knew the Father except the Son, whom the Father had revealed to the ignorant babes; who could reveal the Father to them except Him? The deepest secret of the Gospel—of human life, of divine life—is here. It is all associated with a Revelation. God is the revealer. God is revealed.

III.

"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in Heaven." Romanists and Protestants have fought to the

death over this passage. Will they not reflect on it a little more? What kind of Revelation was this to Simon Peter? Not, our Lord says, one of flesh and blood. Not a communication from without in letters and propositions such as the eye and ear could take in. But a Revelation of Christ, the Son of God, by the Father in Heaven; a discovery to the man himself of his Lord and King. Surely on that rock Christ would build His Church; not on a man, not on the teaching of a book, but on the Son of God discovered to men as the ground of their thoughts, their life, their fellowship. Simon Peter was to testify of that rock to Jews and Gentiles; that is, to mankind.

IV.

So we pass naturally to the words of Simeon repeated by St. Luke. "A light for the revelation or unveiling of the nations." The prophet had spoken of a covering which was on the face of all nations. The thought of a Supreme God was to them a thought of darkness; linked closely, inseparably, with the thought of death. "There is the child," cries the old rabbi, "who will take this covering away; who will discover the Supreme God to the nations, and so will be the glory of His people Israel, will justify their calling to be a blessing to all the families of the earth, will justify Him whom they have worshipped. But if He unveils God to men, He will also unveil men to themselves. Through Him the thoughts of many hearts about God, their belief and their unbelief, will be revealed." A wonderful pro-

phesy ! The whole Evangelical history is but an exposition of the double aspect which it presents to us.

V.

The passage from the seventeenth chapter of St. Luke is an introduction to all which we read afterwards in the Epistles. "The day in which the Son of Man shall be revealed." What day is that ? What unveiling is that ? The Apostles have certain hints and warnings to prepare them for it, to make them muse on its meaning. Another gift was needful before the word "day"—illustrated though it was by all the facts of nature with which they were most familiar—could come forth in its full spiritual significance. St. John, who in his Gospel dwells so little on the name *Revelation*, helps more than his predecessors to translate it into life. For he tells of the Word in whom was life, and whose life was the light of men. He exhibits Christ as the light of the world. He says, "The Spirit was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

VI.

That Christ was glorified, that the Spirit was given, St. Paul assuredly believed when he addressed any Church. He recognised the existence of a Church as the witness of that glorification, of that gift. The epistle which stands first in the Canon is that in which Romanists recognise the honour paid to their city, which Protestants claim as the exposition of their cardinal doctrine. It must be very

important for our inquiry to know how the Apostle speaks in that letter of Revelation. He does not leave us long in doubt. The word is a prominent one in the outset of the Epistle. It is evidently connected with the subject which occupies him through the whole of it. He is declaring what his Gospel is. He says he is not ashamed of it; *for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, then to the Greek. For the righteousness of God in it is REVEALED from faith to faith, as it is written, The just (or righteous) man shall live by faith.*

The Gospel, he says, is a power to salvation, because it is revelation or discovery of righteousness. It is a revelation or discovery of righteousness not to the eye but to faith. Habakkuk had said—St. Paul says—"The righteous man lives by faith." Being a revelation or discovery of righteousness, it is necessarily a revelation or discovery of wrath against all unrighteousness, against those who are holding down the truth in unrighteousness.

What does this holding down the truth in unrighteousness mean? He goes on to explain. The *power* of God is not unknown to men. There has been a manifestation of it in the things that are seen. The *righteousness* of God has not been unknown to men. There has been a manifestation of it in their consciences. They have confessed acts to be right and to be wrong. They have approved the right, they have condemned the wrong. But they have not liked to retain God in their knowledge. They have resisted the manifestation of a righteous Lord. They have made lords

for themselves out of things beneath them, out of birds, and beasts, and creeping things. So their animal nature has been supreme over them. They have sunk into depths below that nature. They have liked filth : they have exhibited a malice and cruelty which beasts and creeping things could not exhibit.

The meaning of human history—the meaning of the Gospel of Christ—is then, according to the Apostle, inseparably associated with Revelation. There is a revelation of God to the inner man ; he may believe it, embrace it, live by it, live, that is, by trust in the righteous God. Then he is a true man ; he is what he is intended to be. But the Righteous God manifests what He is to the man, though he may turn away from the manifestation ; though he may prefer what is not righteous. The manifestation is proved by the acknowledgment of a Right and Wrong ; proved by the effects on men when they prefer the wrong. They become debased men ; what they are *not* intended to be.

VII.

Yes ! says the Jew, the condition of idolaters is as appalling as you describe it. But we have a Law ; a law written in tables. Have you ? replies the Apostle. And what has the Law done for you ? Has the possession of it made you righteous men, kept you from the unrighteousness which you attribute to the other nations ? If it has not, what are you boasting of ? *There will be a revelation of the righteous judgment of God against those who commit such things*, whether

they have a law written in tables or not. There will be a discovery of that which actually is ;—a discovery to those, whether Jews or Gentiles, who *by patient continuance in well-doing have sought for glory and immortality and eternal life*, a discovery to those *who have been contentious and have not obeyed the truth, but obeyed unrighteousness*. There is the Revelation which is to be looked for hereafter, as he had spoken of the Revelation which was made in the Son of God already. But it is a Revelation of the same kind ; a Revelation of God Himself ; of His righteousness ; of His Being. For this Revelation Gentiles as well as Jews had been waiting and longing. They had been seeking amidst all confusions for the righteous God, for the immortal God, for the life that is in Him. And what they had sought they would find. From this Revelation Jews as well as Gentiles had been shrinking ; because it was the Revelation of Righteousness, and they had been holding down the truth in unrighteousness. But come it must ; none can escape it ; no rocks or mountains can hide any one from it. For it is not an outward Revelation, a Revelation to the eye of the flesh. It will be as it has been, a Revelation to the man within. Such a Revelation alone has been of any avail to the Jew. “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, whose praise is not of man but of God.”

VIII.

If we pursue the Epistle through all its windings to its close, we shall perceive how truly this Revelation of God's Righteousness to the inner man may be described as the subject of it. The same discovery which makes us aware that no man, Jew or Gentile, has any righteousness in himself, is a discovery of that righteousness in which Gentile as well as Jew may trust, that righteousness which has been fully exhibited in Christ dying for our sins, rising again for our justification. It is a righteousness appealing to faith, as any outward object appeals to sight. It is a righteousness into which the man enters by faith ; which becomes truly his when he owns it in his Lord. Such was Abraham's privilege. The righteousness of God was revealed to him, an ungodly man ; he believed in it ; he rose up a righteous man by faith ; he received the sign of circumcision that he was an heir of the Divine righteousness. He transmitted this sign to his descendants as a witness that they might claim the same inheritance. This righteousness of God was revealed to David when he confessed his sin and trusted in God as the Deliverer from sin ; then he rose up with a clear conscience, free from guilt and insincerity. This freedom from guilt, with the peace which follows it, is for all the believers in God's righteousness as shown forth in Christ. For it is mightier than the death which belongs to all in Adam, mightier than the sin of which the Law accuses every man. Before the free gifts of Righteousness and Life,

death and sin, however mighty, however universal, give way. This righteousness explains Baptism. That rite signifies that the man is dead with Christ ; that he rises to righteousness and life by faith in Him. It determines the course of his thoughts and life. He is always to account himself dead unto sin, and alive unto God through Christ. He has given himself to sin ; he can give himself to righteousness ; he can bring forth living fruits to God. Sin's wages are death, God's gift is eternal life. The revelation of righteousness to the race explains the mysterious battles in each individual. It discovers to the man an utter impotence in himself to rise against evil, a slavery to evil which is utterly appalling. It discovers to him the will which protests against evil, which hates evil. This Revelation of righteousness enables him to thank God through Jesus Christ his Lord, for meeting and inspiring the will, for bringing forth that true man in him which believes and trusts and rises out of the slough of his own nature.

Having arrived at this radical and everlasting distinction between the flesh and the spirit in the *man*, the full meaning of a Spirit of God who helps the infirmities of his spirit, who bears witness to it that it is God's own child, who prays in it with groaning that cannot be uttered, bursts upon us. So we are prepared for the magnificent passage respecting that glory which is to be *revealed* in us, with which the *sufferings* of the present time are not to be compared. Does the Apostle speak, as some have fancied, of certain special rewards in heaven which were to make amends

to him for his sufferings? Did he look for a blessing to himself which should distinguish him from his kind? How the next sentence scatters all such wretched calculations! The Spirit who is groaning in him enables him to understand the groans of the whole creation. They are the groans of travail, to be followed by a glorious birth. The Revelation of the Son of God, the discovery of the spirits who have been claiming the righteous God as their Father, and who wake up in His likeness, will be the redemption of the human body and of all the animal portion of the universe, from the bondage into which they have involuntarily fallen; the full assertion of the victory of life over death.

IX.

That such a hope should give occasion to the rapture with which the eighth chapter closes, cannot be deemed wonderful. Perhaps it is even more important—when we associate it with all that has been written of the Revelation previously—in dispersing the dark shadows which have hovered about the ninth. The Jew, whose glorious position calls forth the patriotic passion which is expressed in the first verses of that chapter, had supposed that the outward election of a particular race or body of men was the fulfilment of the Divine purpose. How could that be if a righteous Being was revealing His righteousness, if the highest privilege which any man could possess was to know that righteousness and proclaim it? That man has no will to stand or to run but that which he derives from the Divine

Will, is assuredly the doctrine of the whole Epistle. But this Divine Will is revealed as an entirely righteous Will, a Will to make men righteous, a Will which is to be trusted altogether. Being such a Will, the dream of an arbitrary election, such as the Jew imagined for his race, the Pharisee for himself, such as Christians have borrowed from them in the interest of the Church or of individual believers, is shivered to atoms. St. Paul, who has been claimed as the advocate of it, is the very witness how monstrous, how contemptible, how impossible it is. Esau, the first-born, is set aside that the purpose might be shown to be tied to no succession. Pharaoh is raised up that man's power, man's sovereignty, might be insulted and overthrown by the righteous Deliverer of slaves. So while he poured out bitter tears over the ruin which the chosen land was bringing upon itself by its determination to establish its own righteousness and its refusal to submit to God's righteousness, he shows how the purpose of God has triumphed in the revelation of His righteousness to the people of other nations; how it will triumph at last over the unbelief of Jews as well as Gentiles, "so that all Israel shall be saved."

On the basis of this Revelation of righteousness the Apostle builds all his exhortations to Jews and Gentiles; that they present their bodies living sacrifices to God; that they would be transformed by the renewing of their minds, so that they might know what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God; that they would not be wise in

their own conceits ; that they would not judge each other or put stumbling blocks in each other's way ; that they would not seek to please themselves ; in short, the whole morality of a Christian society—all the most difficult duties of those who compose it. It was to be expected, then, that after he had fulfilled his special function as a Hebrew of the Hebrews and as an Apostle of the Gentiles, by showing how Christ had proved Himself a minister for the truth of God to the circumcision as well as of the uncircumcision, and after he had shown that in his care for the whole flock he did not forget the particular members of it, he should sum up the whole Epistle with the ascription : "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith : to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever."

I quote the whole passage (1) that it may be compared with the opening sentences of the Epistle, and that it may be seen how complete and harmonious a work that Epistle is ; (2) because it introduces the word mystery in connection with Revelation, and prepares us for the study of the Epistle to the Ephesians, where that connection is fully developed ; (3) because the emphasis given to the prophetic Scriptures shows us in what sense the Apostle supposes them to be

ministers of the Revelation, how far he was from imagining that as mere letters they *were* the Revelation.

X.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians, unlike in its general design to the one I have been considering, opens with a sentence respecting Revelation. The Corinthians, of whom so many complaints are to be made presently, are first of all congratulated on the gifts which the Spirit has bestowed on them, and on their expectation of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The commendations and complaints illustrate each other; both together illustrate the Apostle's method of directing the Churches. The Corinthians are puffed up by their individual gifts—by their differences from each other. Their teacher rejoices in the gifts which they have received as a body for the edification of each other. They are divided under separate leaders—Paul, Apollos, Cephas. He is delighted with any signs that they are keeping before them the common Lord—the Lord of all other Churches as well as this one, of whom Paul, Apollos, Cephas were merely ministers. That relation of this opening sentence to the sequel of the epistle helps us to understand *what* the Corinthians when in their proper healthy state were waiting for. They had confessed a crucified man to be the King of Men, the Son of God. To maintain a confession so strange in the face of a Cæsar who had, it seemed, proved himself to be King of Man, whom the world worshipped as a god, was difficult enough. To maintain it was even more difficult for

a Greek community, always ready to debate about opinions and notions, and to follow men as the representatives of them. Only if they supposed that Jesus would actually be revealed as that which they had owned him to be—only if they looked for a manifestation of Him as a King in the glory of his Father, could they bear up against the taunts of Jews and idolaters, against the more bewildering taunts which came to them from within. The leaders under whom they were disposed to fraternise were living men, to whose voice they had listened. If He into whose name they had been baptized was only a person who had once lived—if He ever became to them merely a notion—their habits of partisanship would be more and more fixed in them; they would become weary of their present leaders because they spoke of an immortal, invisible object; they would split into ever fresh factions; the more cultivated would relapse into philosophical sects, the ignorant into gross idolatry. But if Christ was not merely of the past, but veritably *the* one to whom all princes were subject, in whom all schools found their meeting point, He would be shown to be what He was. Not surely by a “coming” down again into earthly conditions, as some have gathered from our version; not by His sitting as a rival Cæsar on a throne in Jerusalem to give that city supremacy over Rome: that would be no manifestation of the Christ who died on Calvary, but of another Christ altogether, such as Scribes and Pharisees dreamed of: not by this, but by that appearing in the glory of his Father and the holy angels of which He spoke while He

dwelt among the twelve fishermen, a glory which should make the self-exalting glory of emperors look utterly mean and contemptible.

XI.

The next use of the word in the second chapter, is one to which I would bespeak especial attention. St. Paul has been contrasting the wisdom of this world with that hidden wisdom of God in a mystery which the princes of this world did not know, or they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. He speaks, he says, *that* wisdom, not the other—he quotes the passage: *What things eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have risen into the heart of man these things God hath prepared for them that love Him. But to us has God revealed it* (the mystery), or them (the things which eye hath not seen) *through His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things, or the depths of God.* The more earnestly we meditate this verse the more I think we shall find—(1.) That the discovery of God Himself, of His inmost being, of His own love, constitutes the Revelation; (2.) That God Himself by His Spirit acting on the *spirit of man which is in us*, is the Revealer; (3.) That this Revelation is of that which is *invisible* and infinite—beyond the grasp of the senses, beyond the grasp of the intellect. The opposition between the spirit of man and the soul is especially prominent here. It penetrates, I believe, the whole of the Epistle, and of all St. Paul's writings. Perhaps nothing is so much wanted for the exposition of

these writings and for the development of Christian theology as a distinct recognition of it. At all events we can have no clearer proof than this passage affords that the Revelation of Christ does not mean, in St. Paul's language, His appearance in a visible form. That Christ did appear visibly—that He took the flesh of man—was a cardinal article of his creed,—never asserted more vehemently than now, when he proclaimed Jesus Christ and Him crucified as the subject of his preaching. But the *Revelation* was precisely that which enabled him to recognise, through the visible, the invisible—in the crucified man, the Lord of glory, the Wisdom and Word of God. The Corinthians, full of soulish pride, would have separated the hidden wisdom from the cross and passion. He was taught by the Spirit to discern the hidden wisdom in and through the cross and passion.

XII.

Only second in importance to this memorable sentence is the expression which occurs in the third chapter, when he is speaking of the gold, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, which some have built on to the one foundation that is laid, Jesus Christ. *Each work will become manifest: for the Day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire.* Here comes forth that use of the word Day which we may trace throughout the Apostle's writings. *What Day?* men have asked. How shall we determine when it is to be looked for? How can you determine when *any* day is to be looked for? You expect it when the night is over. The

Day stands here and everywhere in opposition to night. The belief in Christ, the Light of Men, the Light of the World—visionary or mystical, if you like to call it so—was the belief of the Apostles and Evangelists. You cannot change it for any other without changing them. The Day therefore is the coming forth of this Light; the discovery of the source whence all light has flowed into the hearts and understandings of men. Being such, it must be the test or judgment of all the acts, thoughts, purposes of men. Must not such a judgment be in fire? Will not the full blaze of light be a consuming blaze to whatever shrinks from it, to whatever is not living, not substantial? Can any base or corrupt practice, habit, tendency, endure it?

XIII.

I pass to those passages in the fourteenth chapter which have reference to the economy of the Christian Church, and to the gifts with which different members of it were endowed. How much it concerned the Corinthians to be enlightened on these subjects; what danger there was that individuals should glorify themselves for the gifts, and that the use of them for the service of the body should be forgotten, I have hinted already. For those who suppose that our gifts are not the gifts of the Spirit, or that we are not in the same peril as the Greeks of the first century were of accounting them our own, and of fancying that they set us above our neighbours, this part of the Epistle will have a merely anti-quarian interest. Holding, as I do, that every man has a

calling from God, that whatever his work is he ought to recognise it as a calling, that whatever his faculties and energies are he should accept them as gifts from above by which the Spirit would enable him to fulfil his calling, I turn to this chapter with a great desire to gain from it some guidance as to the distinction between one kind of endowment and another. It seems to me, for instance, that the distinction which the Apostle points out between Doctrine, or Teaching, and Revelation, if I am not able thoroughly to seize it, yet helps me to understand much better a characteristic difference which I have observed between two men of great ability and equal conscientiousness. In one I see a great power of acquiring and communicating information, with a lack of anything approaching to insight or apprehension. Another may be far less valuable as a teacher, yet from him may proceed in any region—physical, moral, historical—the discoveries which enrich mankind; which kindle in men the feeling that they can come into actual contact with truths. I cannot believe that, except in accident, modern thought is separated from the thought which was working in Greeks in the days of St. Paul. I fancy he may do as much to clear away some of the mists which most overhang thought and obstruct discovery in our time, as he could do for any church over the infancy of which he watched. And whatever changes may have come over the modes of our assembling together for one purpose or another, it seems to me that the deference and courtesy which he enjoins, and the suggestion that each in

his own way has possibly something to impart which another could not impart, and which might do him good, are not quite unnecessary in an age of noisy, elaborate, and contemptuous criticism.

XIV.

If I had allowed myself to wander in any instance beyond the actual words Revelation and Reveal which I am examining, I should have referred to the memorable passage in the third chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians concerning the *veil* which was on the hearts of the children of Israel in the reading of the Old Testament, concerning the removal of the veil when they should turn to the Lord, concerning the unveiled face with which those who have the spirit of liberty may now behold the glory of the Lord and be changed into the same image. Though the word for veil immediately suggests the one which is derived from it, I do not draw any inference from the language ; I merely wish the reader to consider how much the Apostle's mind was pervaded and possessed by the idea which I have been endeavouring to set forth ; how difficult it must have been for him to disconnect the Gospel of Christ with the removal of a veil from the divine countenance, or to substitute any lower notion of it for that.

This passage in the twelfth chapter, where he speaks of visions and *Revelations* of the Lord, and of the thorn in the flesh which was sent him lest he should be exalted with the number of his *Revelations*, would be taken by every one, I

suppose, to indicate discoveries made to his spirit, not formal communications addressed to some outward organ. *Whether he was in the body or out of the body when he received them, he could not tell, God knew.* If it had been some communication to the senses, he could have told perfectly. The illumination of his inward being was what overwhelmed him ; he needed some outward bodily correction to check the elation which that might have caused. A deep lesson surely to those who crave for such Revelations as the peculiar privileges of saints, and would reduce their bodily strength that they may be the more susceptible of them. The penalty of such vanity is, that instead of being carried into the third heaven, they become the victims of all sensible and animal illusions. St. Paul asked for no personal distinction. His Revelations he received as the discoveries of that which is true for all men as well as himself. He felt the necessity of a severe discipline, not one wilfully adopted for his own mortification, that he might not boast of his saintly or of his apostolical dignity, that he might fulfil his ministry to mankind.

xv.

From the Epistle to the Galatians we learn a little more of the meaning which he attached to Revelation both in its reference to himself and to mankind. The Judaising teachers had persuaded his converts that he was not an apostle in the same sense as the twelve were, that he had borrowed all which was true in his doctrine from them, and

had corrupted it by additions of his own. "I did not receive it from man," he exclaims, "neither was I taught it but by revelation of Jesus Christ." If we adopt a rationalising interpolation of the story of his journey to Damascus, we may, of course, take the word Revelation to mean something else than a direct discovery of Christ as a Person to him ; adhering to St. Luke's and his own account of that journey, that will be the obvious import of the word. So it will correspond with the meaning which has been given to it in all the other passages which we have examined.

XVI.

Or if the objection is raised, "No, for you have spoken of Revelation as something which concerns the spirit of a man, not chiefly his senses ; now you admit that an appearance which blinded the Apostle's sight was that which is denoted by the word," I beg you to hear and consider these words,—“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.” The appearance then to the Apostle's eyes would, if we accept his own testimony, have been nothing—it would have had no real effect on him ; it would not have been in the true sense a Revelation, unless there had been carried home to his spirit the assurance that this was the Lord against whose pricks in his conscience he had been kicking ; that this was the Lord whom he had been per-

secuting when he had been persecuting poor men and women; that this was the Lord who could teach him what he had to do. There was the Revelation—the Revelation of his King. Only of *his* King?—not also of the King of those whom he had been binding and confining? Only of theirs?—not also of the King of those Jewish rulers and priests who had crucified Him? Only of theirs? Not also of the King of those idolaters whom they supposed to be under God's anger? Till he confessed this he could not preach Christ among the heathen; he had nothing to tell them. His conversion was the discovery to him of the common Lord of all men,—he was not a Christian till that common Lord was revealed in him.

XVII.

When he says in the following chapter that he went up to Jerusalem fourteen years after in compliance with a *Revelation*, we are bound, in the absence of other information, to put the same sense upon this expression which it has borne in this Epistle as well as in that to the Corinthians. He must be supposed to distinguish between the formal utterance of a precept and the discovery of a mind or purpose which it behoved him to obey. In using that language I apprehend he has not put himself at a greater distance from us than if he had said, "I was commanded to go to Jerusalem," or, "I inferred from a certain text in the Old Testament that I was to go." The command might have seemed peculiar; we might have asked various

questions about the way in which it could have been made intelligible to him. His inference from the text would have reminded us of many a conclusion which we know to have been illegitimate and superstitious. But we all must ask ourselves very often if we desire to do the will of God, what, in any case in which we are obliged to act, is that will? And when after much struggle and an attempt to ask for light, the light does break in upon us with great clearness, so that we have no doubt about our course, we may most reasonably speak of it as a discovery to us. If we like that word better than revelation, let us use it, only remembering that the sense is not the least different.

XVIII.

There is one remaining instance:—"We were *under the law shut up into the faith that should afterwards be revealed.*" The idea of a tutor preparing his pupils for the day of emancipation when they should receive the full rights of citizenship and sonship, is steadily maintained throughout this passage. When the Son came, claiming men as His brethren, then was the discovery of their true condition, of their glorious birth; then was it no mere submission to a master, however gracious and wise a master. It was the acknowledgment of a parent. Faith in Him was the faith that was afterwards to be revealed. Not another, but He himself, was educating the race for it,

XIX.

There are two passages in the Epistle to the Ephesians which contain the word which we are considering ; these two are keys to the meaning and harmony of that great composition. The first is that in which he tells the Church what he asks for it when he is on his knees before God. It is that "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, will give you the Spirit of Revelation in the knowledge or acknowledgment of Him ; the enlightened eyes of the heart, in order that you may perceive what is the hope of His calling, what is the wealth of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." He had been dwelling among them for years, pleading with them, as he says, night and day with tears ; yet he does not dream that *he* has conveyed or could convey to them this Revelation ; that it could come through any speech or any letters. Speech and letters would only impart any wisdom in so far as the Spirit opened the inward eye, in so far as He discovered to that eye the objects which it was meant to be beheld, without which it could not be satisfied. If we give any sense to Revelation which is inconsistent with this—if we suppose it to denote any mere external communication, or series of external communications, whatever dignity may belong to them, to whatever source we may trace them—we do not only make this prayer unintelligible, we do not only turn it into vanity : we destroy the force and intent of the whole letter ; from the first line to the last, there is not one sentence in it of lofty doctrine

or practical exhortation which does not pass into mist and vagueness, and become contradictory. That the Spirit of God illuminates the spirit of man, that through that illumination the purpose and will of God can be apprehended by human beings, that without it they may form ever so many guesses about Him or themselves, but can attain to no knowledge of either—that is St. Paul's *assumption* everywhere; here we have a more explicit statement of the principle, a more elaborate development of it than in any part of his writings. And here especially the necessary relation between light and life, between darkness and moral corruption, is vindicated, and receives the most rich and various illustration.

xx.

That individual Christians should ask for the help of the Spirit, that they may better understand the contents of the written book, is a formula sufficiently recognised, perhaps, in the religious world of our day. But St. Paul asked the Spirit of Revelation, not for particular individuals, but for the whole Church. And he tells us why. He contemplates the whole Church as formed and united by this Spirit. The highest revelation he and his brother Apostles have received concerns its constitution and unity. "For by revelation was made known to me the mystery which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." What is this mystery?

It is "that the nations are fellow-heirs, and of one body, and partakers of His promise in Christ." By the easy substitution of "Gentiles" for the "nations," we contrive to reduce this mystery into a very obvious commonplace. For awhile the Jews were the favoured people; then St. Paul became a preacher to the "Gentiles." *He* says that he could not have preached to the Gentiles—have been their apostle—unless a quite amazing truth had been revealed to him; the truth that all nations formed one body in Christ—the truth that He was the Head of mankind. That had been the great secret implied in the calling of the Jews to be a blessing to all the families of the earth, implied in the course of human history. Now it was revealed to the Apostles and Prophets how the Spirit was calling Gentiles and Jews, the *sons of men*, into churches, because there was no longer any barrier between them, because the Son of Man had claimed them as His brothers, the children of His Father. Oh mighty calling for the churches in different cities and lands, to show by their unity in Christ that there is this unity, this glory, for all kindreds, and peoples, and tongues! Oh dreadful apostasy, that they should make the one Catholic Church a witness of its own glory by reason of its separation from mankind, a witness of human degradation! Oh just and inevitable punishment of such a perversion, that the Catholic Church should become a mere mockery of unity, a body bound together in assent to certain propositions, declaring that Christ has forsaken it, leaving a mortal as His substitute, now and then descending into the

elements at the bidding of a mortal ! Oh idle attempt of any Church to save itself from the same doom by merely protesting against the usurped authority, unless it restores Christ to His throne, unless it asserts again the redemption and glorification of humanity in Him. A Church which will do that may indeed claim to be holy and catholic if its geographical limits are smaller than those of Ephesus, if its numbers are not greater than those to whom St. Paul's letter was addressed. For then it will show that it accepts the revelation of the mystery which was hidden from ages and generations, the revelation of the Son who is one with the Father in the Eternal Spirit, who is with us to make us one, as they are one.

XXI.

I know no sentence more characteristic of his Epistle to the Philippians than that in which he exhorts them, "as many of those as are perfect to have this mind" (that is, the mind of forgetting that which is behind, and stretching forth to the goal of their high calling) ; and adds, "And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God will reveal even this unto you." An inward discovery surely that must have been of something which hindered the steadfast pursuit of a common object, which divided them from each other by causing them to lose sight of it. I hope we are not to count ourselves incapable of receiving such revelations, though if we look for them in the letters of the book which testifies of them we shall never find them.

XXII.

I come at length to those passages in what some deem the earliest of St. Paul's Epistles (the second to the Thessalonians), which have given rise to so many censures upon his ignorance of times and seasons, to so many exercises of our wisdom in determining them. He speaks of a "Revelation of Christ from heaven with the angels of His power." These words, it is said, if they are taken literally according to their obvious meaning, must import that the Thessalonians were to look for a speedy, if not a quite immediate coming of Christ to destroy the world; that coming which divines in this day teach us to expect, either in our age or in some distant age. I own at once that the language must be construed exactly; that no deviation from the sense which it bears in other parts of St. Paul's writings, can be tolerated; that we must be ready to admit any mistake in his judgment, even if it vitiates the whole of his practical exhortations, rather than introduce any maxims into the examination of his phrases which would be unfair to the phrases of an ordinary author. All I desire is that the word "Revelation" shall receive the interpretation which we have found applicable to it hitherto; that a sense should not be put into it which is inconsistent with its etymology, and with the belief of all the writers of the New Testament. If Apocalypse is taken to mean "coming," a new sense wholly at variance with the one suggested by its etymology is forced upon it; if Christ is supposed to come into

a world which was not already his, or to come for the purpose of destroying a world which He had redeemed, the whole Gospel which St. Paul preached is subverted. On the other hand, if he tells the Thessalonians that He whom they had confessed as the King of men would be shown to be the King of men; that, however the priests in Jerusalem or the Cæsars in Rome might seem to have dominion over heaven and earth, He would demonstrate in flaming fire that there was a mightier than they—a righteous Judge who would burn up the high places in which evil was enthroned, and would vindicate the cause of the needy, of those who had no helper,—what lesson could be more in harmony with those which he had given them hitherto, what consolation could be more needful for men who had every excuse for suspecting that the Prince of Darkness was really supreme? How could any great revolution, any downfall of successful tyranny, mean anything else to such a believer in Christ as the Apostle was but that He was sending His bolts out of heaven; that those who were doing the work of vengeance upon the earth were the angels of his power? With his convictions, he could use no other language, any other would have been a refutation of the message which he lived to proclaim.

Such an expectation, however, it is said most truly, however consistent in him, is inconsistent with “modern thought.” Quite inconsistent with that thought which prevails so widely in all classes of the religious world, that He who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin

Mary ; who was crucified, dead, and buried ; who descended into hell, who rose again the third day, who ascended into heaven, who sitteth on the right hand of the Father—was *not* proclaimed by those acts to be the King of Men, the Judge of quick and dead ; that He may hereafter claim those titles, and that when He does, He will cast aside His character as the Redeemer of mankind and the earth, and will appear as their Destroyer. With such “modern thought,” the news of such a Revelation as that with which St. Paul cheered the Thessalonians is absolutely incompatible. There is no way of bridging over the chasm between them ; one must perish if the other lives. But if, amidst all difficulties, any of us in this year 1870 keep hold of the other belief that He was revealed as King of kings and Lord of lords by those acts of which our creed testifies, then we shall, as much as St. Paul, regard every signal overthrow of those who, in any age, have usurped dominion over His subjects and His brethren as a revelation of His presence, as an act of His heavenly vengeance against oppressors, through whatever angels it may have been, or may be, executed ; as an encouragement to quiet trust in Him, that every enemy of righteousness and faith shall be put down, that every suffering nation and man shall partake in the blessings of His redemption.

By no straining of words from the natural sense—by refusing to practise that strain upon them which modern thought would compel—we are able then to connect St. Paul’s faith and his hope with our own. We can read all

history as a record of Divine Revelations ; we can see in the events of our own time—little as we may assume to take times and seasons out of God's hand—very clear signs that men shall not always be able to hide themselves from the presence of their Judge, let them persuade themselves as much as they may that He has left the earth to them, to lie and murder in it, and to assume His name as the warrant of their evil deeds.

XXIII.

If we advance so far into sympathy with the Apostle we shall have no difficulty, I think, in accepting his statement respecting that other revelation which he assuredly expected and taught the Thessalonians to expect. They were not to deceive themselves with the notion that the day of the Lord—the discovery of His power, would come without another discovery. Good would not be brought forth into full light until evil stood forth in the same light. There would be an unveiling of the Son of Man, but not without an unveiling of the Man of Sin ; of a will which was adverse to His—a will of self-exaltation as His was a will of self-sacrifice, a will to ruin as His was a will to save. Was it necessary for the Apostle to define this Man of Sin more exactly—to say “I mean such and such a person, such a particular sectary or brigand in Jerusalem, or one particular Cæsar in Rome ?” His belief in a *Revelation* would have kept him, I conceive, from doing this, if he had any knowledge which would have enabled him to do it. The dis-

covery of the Man of Sin is weakened—is all but lost—for him who thinks he can see the person who fulfils the character. There may be some one who in each age embodies the worst qualities of that age—who becomes the beast which it worships because he collects in himself the scattered elements of its beastliness. But if it is so, those who recognise his features and refuse to bow before him have been shown in *themselves* what he is—have shuddered at the perception of their own likeness to him—have fled to the Son of Man as the only refuge from the inhumanity to which the Spirit who enlightens their consciences tells them that they might all too readily yield. I tremble when people prove to me by external tokens and delineations who the Man of Sin with whom I may be brought into contact must be. They may be right, and I, accepting their proofs, may just as much carry his image in my heart and be sealed with his name. Whereas if I listen to St. Paul I shall ask that I may recognise the Man of Sin only by the contrast which he presents in his purposes and acts to the Lamb of God; that I may abhor the malice of the one because I cleave to the perfect grace and goodness of the other. If I take any other course I may confound Christ with Antichrist—I may see with complacency the Man of Sin exalting himself into the throne of the Most High, because I have not studied the divine Image or desired that I might be moulded into it.

XXIV.

I pass from the Apostle of the Gentiles to the Apostle of

the Circumcision. Educated as St. Peter was, writing to the Jews of the dispersion, he was sure to dwell with affectionate reverence on the Scriptures of their fathers: the least indifference to the divine oracles would have been shocking to him. Does he then view Revelation as if it were synonymous with the Scriptures; as if it meant the oracles contained in a book? He speaks of looking for a salvation which was ready to be revealed in the last time. He speaks of their faith being tested in the fire that it might be found to praise and honour and glory in the *Revelation* of Jesus Christ. Has not the phrase exactly the sense which it bears in the Pauline Epistles? Does not it denote the discovery of Christ as a person, to faith, to the spirit of man? Was it not this Revelation for which he encouraged men scattered through different idolatrous regions to look? This hope was to keep them a steadfast body, a united society, a royal nation. They were to gird up their loins and hope for the grace that was to be brought to them in the *Revelation* of Jesus Christ. Their hope was to be ultimately, he says, in God. It was the vision of His glory that would be their reward. In consistency with these lessons, he says it was revealed to the prophets that they were working for the ages to come, not for themselves. They were testifying of a suffering and of a glory which they were not to witness while they remained on earth. So in the fourth chapter he speaks to his readers as partakers of Christ's suffering, which was preparing them for the glory that should be revealed; in the first verse of him-

self—an elder among elders, as having the same high calling ; the witness of what had been, the herald of what should be. A striking testimony to the object which all the Apostles set before themselves and before the churches ; not a heaven of partial, selfish prizes for the few ; but a discovery of the God of righteousness and truth, the Father of the whole family of heaven and earth.

XXV.

There is but one instance more, but it is the instance of instances. The last book in the Bible is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Is it a book about Him ? Or does it record an actual discovery of Him as the first begotten from the dead ; the Prince of all the kings of the earth ; the Lamb who was slain ; the Eternal Word of God ? Whether this book shall be a key to the interpretation of all the rest of the Bible, a key to the interpretation of later history, or shall continue to be a collection of riddles for the learned and the unlearned to trifle with, depends, I suspect, on the answer which we make to this question.

I cannot pretend that if we accept these testimonies of the New Testament we may not have to part with some cherished opinions. Many arguments in our books of evidences must be dismissed as untenable ; much of the rhetoric in our Advent Sermons must be rejected as un-

scriptural and mischievous. These losses will have, I think, some compensations.

1. In place of a revealed religion, which is set up to compete with a number of other religions, and about the nature and conditions of which there are innumerable disputes amongst those who accept it as against all others, we shall acknowledge a God who has been revealing Himself at sundry times and divers manners to the nations of the earth, who has ordered the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation on purpose that they might seek after Him, who was not far away from any one of them.

2. In place of laborious efforts to prove that we who are called Christians possess a Divine Book, which separates us from the rest of the world, or that we belong to a Church which has been arbitrarily saved out of a world that is under a curse, we shall believe that God in the fulness of the time revealed Himself in His only-begotten Son, the perfect Image of His Person, so confounding all false and dark images that men had made of Him—so declaring Himself to be the Saviour and Reconciler of the world, the enemy of all which afflicts and oppresses it, the Conqueror of Death and the Grave and Hell.

3. Instead of a vague notion that the Bible or the Church reveals Christ to the few who receive Him, we shall suppose that God Himself has been the revealer of His Son in all who receive Him; that, by His Bible and by His Church, He bears witness that His Son is the Head of every man, the Deliverer of the universe; that His Bible and His

Church only effect anything by their testimony, because He by His Spirit is discovering His Son to the spirits of men as their Lord and Deliverer.

4. Instead of a dreary and fluctuating expectation that some people who have been fortunate enough to become members of the Church, or good enough to deserve their place in it, shall hereafter attain a felicity from which the great majority of mankind are excluded—no one being able to define the nature of that felicity, no one with an earnest sympathy for his fellows being able to hope for it—we shall anticipate the full revelation of Him who has been revealing Himself in all ages as the assertor of righteousness and truth, as the enemy of all injustice and falsehood ; we shall contemplate all the orderly movements of society, all its terrible convulsions, as tending to this issue ; we shall be sure that, awful as the divine day must be—for light is more awful than darkness—it must be good for all, since darkness is essentially evil.



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*PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS
IN THEOLOGY*



THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

PART I.

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PART I.



THE Christian minister is one who has seen Jesus Christ our Lord, who knows Him better and loves Him more than other men do, who has caught His likeness and bears His image. Tranquil, simple and serene, severe yet tender, "sorrowful yet alway rejoicing, poor yet making many rich, having nothing and yet possessing all things," he goes about doing good, healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils, freely receiving, freely giving, in love and righteousness; a man human and divine. It is not necessary that he should be a clever man, or an eloquent man, or a learned man. He should have nothing of the professional about him, nothing of the "expert." He will not be a monk; not a "hail fellow well met" companion, nor a wit, nor a joker; neither will he be an anxious or careworn man. And his teaching is rather the welling out of a full heart than the logic of an artificial theology. Statements, historic facts, and infer-

ences he can produce when required, and arguments also. Yet arguments about what? His true argument is the realisation of the mind of Christ, and the representation of that to others—Christ as being God manifest in the flesh. Full of assurance as to the good character of God, he has no hesitation about it in speaking to his brethren. He says that God is not worse, but better, than they themselves are in that in which they are best,—in love and righteousness; that if they, who are evil, can give good gifts to their children, how much more their heavenly Father? He tells men to be at peace; that they should argue from the known to the unknown, from that they know about God, the necessarily good character of God, to that they know not, namely, the character of things about them. He has found in Christ that which Leverrier found in the planet Neptune, the visible proof of that which his philosophy had previously indicated. In Christ he finds God, and that with such strength and certainty of conviction, that he is ready to say, "If He be not God, there is no God." In Christ he finds an explanation of all things, and therefore he is a Christian minister; a satisfactory explanation, and therefore he is "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might," *i.e.*, in that which He is. "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" That is his warrant. And that he *has* seen is shown by that which he is himself.

This was the warrant of St. Paul, as it is of all true ministers. St. Paul had seen Him. Yes, at last. On the way to Damascus, a light had dispelled his darkness; too

great a light at first, for it blinded him, but eventually it couched his blindness. The light showed him his darkness, and it had a voice, too, which explained what it [darkness] was. It confirmed all his conscience had previously been telling him, and showed him that his past misgivings were the indications of a world not then realised. He recognised that the pricks against which he had been kicking, as when he held Stephen's garment, when he got his letters for Damascus, the questionings which his nobler nature had ever been putting when he was brought into connection with the things of Christ, his doubt whether he was opposed to Moses, were all resolved by the direct vision of Christ. He found that He was God. He knew He was Divine by that He was and did. And in recognising this, he also recognised that Christ put away no good thing, while He brought many; that all that was good in the old dispensation was present in the new, with the addition of something better; that the new was the completion, and not the annulling, of the old; that the Revelation of the Son replaced the Law by a Father; that if God could have divine offspring, the offspring must be such as Christ was; and that, being such, Christ was the Son, the promised Seed, and Messiah. Besides this, he saw that that which in Christ is well-pleasing unto God, must from its own nature be well-pleasing when in man, and that its nature, being what it is, is elect, precious; and that they who have this, have what He had, and are sons also; that Christ is not instead of, not in lieu of, but

the first-born among, many brethren. St. Paul saw this ; he saw in Christ that which made Him One with God, wherein God met man, and man was one with God. The Divinity of Christ was revealed to him as a foretaste of man's union with God. St. Paul had now recognised Christ. The truth came to him in a vision on the way to Damascus ; Ananias explained it more fully to him there ; but the revelation was to himself and in himself, in his own soul, that " candle of the Lord," which had thus been set on fire by the vision on the road. Listening to the Divine within him, he heard its voice identified with that of Christ without in the words, " Why persecutest thou me ? " And he found Christ and his conscience one. He knew now whence the Spirit within him came and went, what that was which breathed within him, that it was the breath of God, that it came from God and went to God ; and thus he was born again ; or rather he now knew that he had been born before, and what the nature of that birth was. He was now aware that he was the member of a Divine family, and he felt its nature stir within him ; he found that he too was a son, a son with the same inheritance, that of the One Spirit, the Spirit which made its members one. " It pleased God," he says, " to reveal His Son in me "—*i.e.*, to reveal that I also am a son. In the revelation of what Christ was he not only saw what Christ was, but what he was himself, a son and joint-heir with Christ. In finding and seeing Christ, this double truth was manifested to him, and by its revelation he was other than he had been before. He was overwhelmed

with the revelation. He had to consider, he had to bethink himself; and so we read that he went into the deserts of Arabia, and remained there apart for three whole years, communing with his heart and "still." Yes, it had pleased God to reveal Christ to him, who Christ was, what He is, what God's sons must be. St. Paul found Christ, he apprehended, at least in part, that for which he was apprehended by Him, and thus and in Him he had an answer and response to all the past queries and difficulties of his own heart—those difficulties and queries which all men have, which testify of their high origin and relationship, but which are not solved until they are solved in Christ. We hear a voice—yea, many voices—voices crying in the wilderness, contradictory, confused; we feel currents running within us hither and thither; but there is no harmony, no solution, no indication of satisfactory purpose, until we get the solution in Christ. In His Sonship we have, however, an origin and end, a purpose and plan, which satisfy us; the Father calls out the Son, and the Son the Father, and the Eternal Spirit proceeding from them bears all to an assured and sufficient end. In Christ, as the Alpha and Omega, the origin and end are one, all laws and currents meet, and are made one; He is the heart from which they flow, He is the eye in which they centre. It was that St. Paul saw: he saw heaven opened, and beheld the "Santo Volto," the sacred countenance in which all sadness and sorrow dwell, all blessedness and peace and triumph. God was no longer to him a word, but a power; a nature manifested by a life.

That which was invisible had become visible, that which is in its nature eternal beyond us had come within us, the greater had been held by the less, men's eyes had seen and their ears heard the Divine word; God had become manifested by a life, and they had handled the manifestation. God had dealt with them by no messages of election, messages of definition, but by the manifestation of a life; of Him in our life, of God when acting our life, of our life as it is acted by God, of our life as the Divine and its manifestation. Without seeking God, men had found Him. Nay, God had sought and found them, drawing near to them in Christ. It was the true God, and eternal life, and they knew it to be so. It had been a secret, yet it had been an open secret, simple when seen, a matter of course, as it were, yet like all such, ere seen, apparently inscrutable. Paul had seen it in this sense before, yea, oft when Saul, or, as he says of himself, when "after the flesh;" but then he did not recognise it. Now he recognised it, and was changed by the recognition, or rather, perhaps, being changed, he recognised. How? We cannot tell. The fulness by which it operates, when the time comes, is all we ever know. The question of time God ever retains unto Himself. Now, however, St. Paul had got the key to the mysteries of God: all secrets, save those of time, were open in Christ. The Lamb opens the sealed book to those who know Him. To such heaven and hell are open. Jesus, sitting at the right hand of God, opens the book, and no man can shut it again; and if He shut, no man can open.

He binds and looses at His will ; but His will is His character, and no one who knows Christ will seek to alter that will, but rather his own. The keys of Peter are the keys of Paul : it is the same secret, the same rock, that on which the Church is built, and the world also, the rock of order, the outcoming of love, the revelation of the Father in the Son. Whoso has the mind of Christ has the keys of Christ ; and to have this is to have assurance, and victory because of assurance. It does not explain all mystery, but it enables us to bear all mystery. Entering into the Divine Spirit, we overcome the nature of man, his lower nature. Thus, and thus only, can man raise himself above that which, shared by him with the goat, the monkey, and the tiger, would undo him. It was, therefore, ever the simple *prayer* of St. Paul, "that I may know Him"—(that is, that I may resemble by knowing Christ)—"that I may know Him, and the fellowship in His sufferings, being made conformable to His death." In Christ he recognised the coming of that "Just One" for whom he and all good men had longed ; he recognised the nature when he saw it, and bowed his head and worshipped. To "apprehend, as he was apprehended of Him," was all that his soul now desired. Yet he felt he had not fully apprehended, for now he knew something of the greatness of the Divine height and depth, and therefore he said,—“not that I have already apprehended, but I follow after”—I desire ever to follow. He had been long in His presence, yet he felt that as to Philip, so to him Jesus might until now have said, "Have I been

so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" But now he knew Him, or at least in part.

Alas, how often does this light shine unknown, the darkness comprehending it not! How often do we bring our own darkness into the midst of God's light! God is ever in the midst of the world, and ever is in it, as He is; yet now, might not Jesus say, "Oh, righteous Father, after eighteen hundred years of manifestation, the world hath not known Thee?" Lighter, indeed, to some extent, is the world now than it was before Christ came; but how dark it still is!

Why? Mainly, no doubt, because Christ has been so badly set forth by those to whom it was given to make Him known—the Christian ministry. Surely the shortcomings of the ministry have had much to do with the world's ignorance of Christ. How little in truth has Christ been set forth—shown, that is, as the image of the Father, shown by His disciples bearing His image! How great a decadence has there not been from this, how different an image set forth, how different a conception of Christ from the original! Alas! a minister of Christ too soon came to mean, and in most countries still means, not an humble, yet real, likeness to His Lord, not one bearing Christ's image by family resemblance and the reflection of love, but, instead of this, a professional person, a man dressed up for an occasion; one who does certain things at certain times and hours; who stands, for example, with his face to (what is called) an altar and his back to the

people ; who kisses the altar and bows his head ; who rings a little bell, and holds something up ; who kisses the altar again, and turns round, and says, "Go, for it is now sent up." The keys of heaven are jingling at his girdle. Or, in another place, one who mounts a pulpit stair—solemnly, thoughtfully, anxiously ; he commences a discourse, he propounds an abstraction, he lays great stress upon it, for it is very difficult ; he argues, he demonstrates, he proves, he endeavours to get the people to understand it, he toils to do so. Are they taking it in ? Have they mastered the proposition, the all-important distinction ? Can they hold it ? Then they are safe. He descends the stair ; they may rest in peace. Does either of these set forth Christ ? Is this setting forth Christ even as He set forth the Father ? Surely some great change has come over the ministry, when a mysterious substance in one case, and an equally mysterious proposition in the other, are called the work of the ministry. Did Christ really come to reveal, and be, such as this ? Are these followers of Paul, even as he was of Christ ? Surely from such places Christ has disappeared ; and we may ask—

"Domine quo vadis ?"

O Lord, whither art Thou gone ? Have such seen the Lord, if they say this is He ? Have they themselves found Christ who thus set Him forth ? Has the sacred countenance, the *Santo volto*, been seen of such, revealed on the way, or in any way ? Is this the faith of Christ—the revelation by Jesus of the Eternal God, the Alpha and Omega—

the First and the Last? Are such in the one Spirit on the Lord's day, who set Him forth thus in His house? Or are they but prophets who have seen nothing? Alas! they are but professional and second-hand persons, echoes of false sounds. None but Christ can give Christ.

Let us not be supposed to deny the need of official persons and set times for making known the way of the Lord. Such there are and must be, when we speak of a revelation. A revelation infers means, means and ways. Somebody conveys it; it must have set times and ways for its conveyance. But then these ever must be in connection with that which they convey, and they are to be ruled by this, not this by them; if they do not convey that which ought to be conveyed, they are nothing. The ministry must be of a piece with its message, the stream with the fountain whence it flows, both congruous, continuous, one, as a river from its source, one element, one character; and the element of the Christian ministry is Christ.

Happily we can be at no loss as to that which Christ was, and that accordingly which Christianity is in itself, or that which Christ came to give. This is plainly found in that which He was Himself. The nature and the character of the Founder give the nature and character of His ministry. And the nature and character of its Founder are plainly seen in the authentic writings of the New Testament. In the Gospels we have His life and death, His personal teaching, and His example. In the Epistles we have the impressions of what those meant to His early followers or

contemporaries. The Divine image itself is before us in its simplicity in the Gospels ; and it is that with which mankind and the ministry have most to do.

By what He was and taught the Christian revelation and ministry are both to be determined. "I am," says Jesus, "the light of the world : he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." He was therefore to be a light ; light was to be His characteristic. This light which He was and gave has to be conveyed to men. The ministry, then, has for its office to transmit light, spiritual light ; but to transmit it, it must have it : it must itself first be lightened by it. This light has many aspects : it is a light which is to reprove the world of sin ; it is a light which is to commend and induce to righteousness ; it is a light which is to enable us to discriminate and judge ; it is a light, above all, which is to reconcile man to his Maker, and it does so by showing what the Maker is. It is a light which being received regenerates those who receive it. By knowledge it gives them "fellowship with the Father," and so regenerates them. This is the character and the result of the light of Christ. This is the light of His light. It must be the nature of the Christian ministry, the light of its light. Light must be its great characteristic and qualification. This ministry is only His, as it is a continuation of His light. The ministry must have the mind and spirit of Christ, and show forth Him, even as He showed forth the Father. As He was a manifestation of God, so they must be a manifestation of Christ. Every true minister is an incarnation and imitation

of Jesus Christ. Thus only, and so far only, are men truly His ministers.

“But alas!” may not some say, “who is sufficient for these things?” Who indeed? And such will add, “Surely there is something else, less than this, or the Gospel had died out. We are weak; God in His compassion does not require so much as this. Has He not given us a less and more ordinary thing, officials and a system? Did not Christ also institute material rites and ordinances, and give us a ministry to hand down these things in an ordinary and common way; a body, a Church, with a fixed and specific ministry, ordinances, and laws, which, generally speaking, are enough, and which, indeed, it is at our peril that we neglect and oppose?”

Most true; but then these rites, and ordinances, and ministry are entirely dependent upon, and must be a continual outcoming or revelation of, the Spirit and life of Christ, and they are real and of value only as they are in this connection, and in proportion as they are so; they are but signs and seals of a spiritual life, signs and seals of its previous possession, without which they are nought; nothing but seals and signs upon unwritten paper. Christian Ordinances are indeed links whereby men are connected with Christ, and thereby with one another. But unless they do so connect men with Christ in a spiritual way first, they connect nothing. They are not generative of life themselves, they are but evidences of life, life produced elsewhere, and produced already; they are never

pledges of that which is to be, but proofs of that which already is or has been. Their genuineness, and that of the ministry which imposes them, depend upon this previous life and its distinction. The sacraments of the Church are indeed the work of appointed officers ; but the officers and the sacraments are signs of that which existed before, and are not themselves originators. If that which produced them is not in them, they are nothing.

But it will be said, "Surely there is more than this in Christ, surely He was more than a mere revelation of God, and a means whereby thus we might be united to God ! Was there not a transaction in Christ, some arrangement between Him and God, whereby something was done which otherwise would never have been, and by which salvation comes to a world, or to a portion of the world, to a world or portion of it which otherwise would have perished ?"

Some such interpretation has indeed been placed upon the Incarnation of God in Christ ; but unless we believe that there is more than one God, and that God is divided, or that Christ is other than and less than God, any such arrangement or transaction is impossible. God cannot be divided, and less than God we cannot deem Christ to be. Were He less, the difficulty would still remain ; for no creature whatever could be of sufficient value to yield the results attributed to the life and death of Christ. As no such basis can exist, so no conception erected on such a supposed basis can be of any value.

The Incarnation, no doubt, laid the foundation of an Election or Church, and was a provision for taking a portion out of the world, but only that it might be a first-fruit of saving, and a leaven for communicating salvation to the rest. There is, indeed, a Church, but it is never complete in itself; it is a means for the salvation of others, and only complete in their salvation. Such means exists, no doubt, and must exist. Christ came to save the world by the manifestation of Himself. When He went away, a means for continuing the revelation was needful, and accordingly was instituted; it exists in the Church or in the Christian ministry, but only in the connection and order which we have laid down, ever in connection with the life of Christ, never genuine when apart from this connection.

“But if there are true and specified office-bearers, that which they do is rightly done, and without them is not done at all.”

True; but it must ever be kept in view that they only do it aright when they themselves are right, and that they only are right when in manifest and conscious connection with Christ, when the life of Christ is really and visibly present in them. Christ instituted a body; but it must be understood that it is not the producer or factor of the Divine life, but the Divine life of it; that rites and ordinances are the products of the Divine life, and not its factors. The life must come from men who have it themselves, and who, in consequence of having it, administer the rites as signs and seals, which themselves are nothing save in so far as they are tokens of

a life which has preceded them. The Church must be herself a revelation of things unseen, even as Christ is a revelation of things unseen, that is, of God. That which constitutes a Church and gives it any value is this, her being what Christ was, a revelation of the Father, a continuation of Christ. She must be an incarnation of Christ, even as He was of God the Father, one in spirit; the spirit proceedeth from her even as from the Father, for she, if true, is one with Christ. As Christ and the Father are one, so the Church is one with Christ; the Church must be one in spirit with Christ to be a true and real Church, or of any value for the salvation of the world. The Church must be of one spirit with Christ, and Christians with one another, if it is a true Church and true Brotherhood. And as there is no difference between Christ and the Church, so there is no difference between brother and brother: all are one in Christ; for Christianity is all of one. In Christ there is no distinction, neither Jew nor Greek, yea, neither male nor female: the members and office-bearers are all of one substance, one piece, one bread, as of one spirit. There is in the Church no esoteric and exoteric doctrine; no doctrine known and knowable by some, and not known or knowable by others; no secret rites open to some and shut to others; no sacerdotal caste, no hereditary priesthood; no intrinsic conveyance by matter of spiritual life, nothing capable of being conveyed by matter apart from mind. In Christ there is none of this. Christianity came to abolish all such conceptions of religion, and to lift man into a

higher religion, where these things are not and cannot be, by lifting him into the very and truer presence and fellowship of God. It broke down all screens and substitutions, all limitations of time and space, and raised men out of the world, by lifting them into the presence of the Father, by the knowledge given of God by Christ Jesus.

In such a region it is evident that there can be no distinctions of kind ; that that which is there, if there, is common to all ; that that which is possessed is common in its nature, and of one kind ; that if there is difference, it can be but in degree of possession. Christians, therefore, are all of one. If there is difference, it is but in degree ; there is no difference of class or kind, no priesthood and laity distinct from one another, but all are one, whatever name they bear, whether they be called priests or laymen. They are one, that is, one with another ; laymen to one another, priests when they go forth to gather in those outside. No one has any vested right of difference or superiority.

“ But it was not so in the beginning. In the beginning surely there was a difference. Were there not then apostles, elders, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, all different ? ”

There was of course, as there must have been, a difference in the beginning, just as there is now ; but still a difference of degree, not of kind. The kind is one, and the difference depends on knowledge ; it is a difference of spirit, not of rank. The Apostles were what they were because they were more like to Christ than the others, and knew most of Him ;

and so it is now. There were outward appointments to the ministry, made by the Lord Himself; but the appointment was in connection with what the persons appointed were, what He knew them to be. The appointment did not confer a power, but was a seal of a power gone before. The name was given from the nature, not the nature from the name; they were to make Christ known, themselves first knowing Him. The office existed for Christianity, not Christianity for the office; and the Christianity came first. It did not take its nature from the office, but the office from it. This is the eternal relation of the Christian ministry.

The Christian ministry, no doubt, is capable of being regarded from two different and even opposite aspects, but one of these alone can be the primary or true; for their principles are so different as even to be, when pressed into opposition, destructive of one another. One principle is that the Christian revelation consists of an outer and inner doctrine, an open and a secret, administered by a caste which is in possession of its teaching and rites, and which therefore carries with it a mysterious force; the other principle is that it is all of one, of one doctrine equally in the possession of all believers, with rites which derive their significance and power from this connection, from their connection, that is, with a knowledge of which they are the expression and seal. This last we hold to be the true definition, and the genuine aspect of the ministry. Accordingly we cannot divide believers into separate castes, or into classes insurmountably severed, but must range them only as differences arise from

higher or lower degrees of knowledge and spirit. We hold that there are indeed office-bearers in the Church, but that that which distinguishes these from their brethren is not a difference of kind, but of degree, degree signified by a sign or by office, all men being equally called to be kings and priests by the revelation of God which is in Christ. We hold, therefore, that office-bearers become such rather by pressure of natural order and the working of spiritual law by the internal operations of the Holy Spirit, than by a commission or markings from without.

This, certainly, is the order which we should expect in connection with a revelation of which the characteristic is that it operates by means of knowledge; and experience tells us that it is the true law of the Christian life. In point of fact—in regard to the ministry or offices in the Church—it is the law which we adopt. The initiative comes from the individual himself. A man finds himself moved by the Spirit (as it is expressed) to seek the holy ministry; he then goes to such as have the power to grant admission, which is with us the bishop, and to the question, "What moved him?" his reply, "The Holy Ghost," is counted sufficient, and he is recognised, or set apart to office. The presumption of sufficiency and genuineness of the inward qualification warrants the ordaining officer to put his seal; he does so, and the candidate is then made an office-bearer, and designated a minister, or priest, or bishop, as the case may be. He who ordains cannot, of course, form an infallible judgment: he

does the best he can, and admits or objects as he thinks he sees or does not see sufficient proof of the inward divine qualification. No other method is open to him. He cannot create or secure by any act of his the necessary and inward qualifications. He believes and trusts that they are already present ; he examines, he accepts, he prays ; but beyond this he cannot go. This is the only process admissible in connection with a revelation of which the characteristic and mode of operation is spiritual illumination ; the only method of selection suitable for a ministry which is to be efficient by means of the conveyance of spiritual light. Such a ministry cannot be the product of any but an internal and spiritual qualification.

It is evident, however, that this, the original and true conception of the Christian ministry, soon came to be superseded by another and a false. The true and spiritual was supplanted by a false and materialistic basis. As the knowledge of Christ's life and work faded away, there arose a misconception and reversal of their real nature and principles, and a corresponding misapprehension of the nature of the Christian ministry. If we look at the New Testament writings and those of the Christian Fathers in descending succession, we shall see how continuously this process of degradation goes on. Spiritual light and meaning die away, and, as they diminish, a technical and mechanical use of words and rites comes into their place, until at last a mediatorial priesthood, using words and rites supposed to be efficacious irrespective of the understanding, misrepresents that ministry which

stood by the condition of revealing or making known. This second ministry claimed the keys of heaven, but it had lost the meaning of what heaven was, and the purpose of making earth a heaven ; and so it relegated men to a future heaven, of which the nature was unknown, because it had lost the light which it was here to give. It operated not by knowledge, but by signs, of which the meaning was forgotten ; and if these afforded no results, it did not attribute failure to them, but postponed their effects to another world. In point of fact it did not know what the sign meant, and, having lost the conception of the heavenly kingdom, it came to conceive of an earthly one, such a conception as Christ came to overcome ; and to this it brought His Church, that instead of its *not* being of this world, it became that kingdom *par excellence*, a visible kingdom, at last with a visible head seated on the very Cæsar's seat, and calling from thence for the submission of the earth.

What the original constitution and varieties of the Christian ministry were we can gather alone with certainty from the pages of the New Testament. It is true that when this was written, the Church was only in embryo, but its principles were fully there, and their true operation must ever be uniform. In the New Testament we find the ministry called by diverse names, names indicative of different functions,—apostles, elders, overseers, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and other designations. Some of these appear to have been formally set apart to their office, and others to have exercised their functions in accordance

with their natural or supernatural gifts, apart from formal appointment, It would seem that at their meetings all members of the Church were equally entitled to act. In the first great gathering, or council of the Church, for the consideration of matters which affected all, we find all its members gathered together, and engaged in united action (Acts xv.). The places are taken in what may be called a natural order, which also the proceedings follow. St. James, called the Lord's brother, is appointed to preside, St. Peter and St. John are said elsewhere to have been "pillars," and the decree of the council runs in the names of all: "the apostles, elders, (and) brethren." The same course is taken at the reception of the deputation from Antioch, and again on the mission of Barnabās and Silas back to Antioch.

We have no detailed or general history of the first two centuries after the closing of "the Acts of the Apostles;" and the individual histories of Ignatius, Cyprian, Jerome, and even Irenæus, do not give us the relations of believers throughout all the Church during that time. But with Eusebius of Cæsarea there is a complete picture of his times. He presents us, however, with a very different picture of the Church from that which we had in the days of the Apostles, when the Synod sat in Jerusalem. There we had numerous office-bearers, and the participation of all members of the Church in her affairs. With Eusebius all this has disappeared, and we have but one office and one actor. The Church herself has disappeared,

the elders and brethren have no place ; but one person is visible, the overseer or bishop, into whose hands all power and representation seem to have merged. He is everything ; the Church, the elders and brethren, nothing. From this it has been inferred that such government and representation was the original and only divinely-appointed method for the Church, that so great a change as this involves from any other is impossible in the time. But two hundred years in such times of the Church would allow for great change in matters of government or representation. It is probable that the real cause of the change (if change there were), and the adoption of this mode of government and representation, originated in the idea that centralisation was needful for the preservation of the Church's unity and of truth. Whatever was the reason, however, or the previous history of the Church, it is certain that, at the time of Eusebius of Cæsarea, government or representation by bishops, and the aspect of the Christian ministry involved in it, had become universal.

But if the plan of centralising representation and government was supposed to be a security for truth and unity, experience has shown that it was mistaken ; for as it must be evident to all conversant with the principles and character of revelation, and with the true nature of spiritual things, that such could not be the consequence, so history shows us that it was not. The multiplicity of early councils (solely composed of bishops), called alone because of differences among the bishops, shows that it was not so

even at that time. St. Athanasius is said at one time, in fact, to have defended Christian truth against all the world—that is, the bishops. And in modern times the fact that while clergy trace their origin to identical sources, they differ in their teaching (so even as to sever church communion), different doctrines prevailing in neighbouring parishes and countries, should long ago have shown us that the theory is a false one.

Yet some mechanical theory for union ever hangs about us ; and if the personal criterion fail, an abstract expression comes to have a similar power. Accordingly we find many even of our own clergy, who are in communion with no other Church in the world, clinging to the designation “catholic,” and ready to give up all that is most precious for it, not realising that it is not applicable anywhere in the sense they mean. The word “catholic,” if taken to signify the truth as held by all, could never have had a true application, for the truth was never so held, nor, had anything been so held, would it have been made true by such a holding. The Catholic Church cannot be ascertained by the test of numbers, which, if there be no such application, cannot be made a practical test. As a rule, the Church, in losing her internal light, increases her external character, assimilating herself to the likeness of the kingdoms of the world, and generally of that kingdom in which she is placed. In Rome and Constantinople we find her with an imperial system ; in Switzerland with a republican ; in England with a constitutional or limited episcopate ; and in America, where many

nations are in embryo, with representations of all methods of government together. Moreover, it is evident among ourselves that the subdivisions and denominations of churches, and the outward distinctions which prevail in matters of religion, are more owing to social or worldly causes than to spiritual or internal differences. The upper classes affect an organisation in conformity with their own habits and position, and the lower with theirs ; and the outward aspect of the churches affects the choice of individuals. Marquises and countesses do not gravitate to Dissent, but rise to the imperialism of Rome ; Dissenters do not leap *per saltum* to the Papacy, but ascend the constitutional steps of the Church of England. Once, no doubt, it was different. Wars and persecutions were once connected with questions of church government ; but now it is not so.

It may seem a strange thing to say, but no doubt the same cause—social differences—lies at the bottom of the distinctions in the ministry. They are produced, we believe, in the same way, that is, rather by social than religious differences. Yet it does not follow that seeking rank and wealth in the ministry is always a sign of a looser morality ; for rank and wealth, as a rule, are produced by the exercise of virtues difficult of attainment ; and it is evident that a clergy poorly provided for does not secure a higher spirituality, but that it only brings forward candidates for office from a lower sphere. Social considerations, we believe, lie at the root of the distinctions among

clergy, as they do at the foundations of the variety of churches.

The real question raised by these considerations is not whether more or less of worldly things is desirable, but whether worldly things are desirable at all; whether, in fact, a separate class is required for the ministry, deriving its maintenance from it. On which point we shall further on have somewhat to say. But for the present we may admit that the world has not as yet attained an elevation in which it can do without special ministers of religion, and that a special office and ministry are therefore still required. Entertaining which view, we do not sit lightly to the obligations which the constitution of the Church of England imposes. Holding to the necessity of some order, we affirm the superiority of that which we ourselves enjoy. Such order is historically well founded, and we believe obligatory upon us.

But this order is only for the well-being, not for the being, of the Church. That for which the ministry exists, the conveyance of the Gospel, the revelation of the Father by Christ, gives indeed a position of highest honour and authority to the conveyer; but it is his only who really does convey such revelation. The commission itself is no ground unless something sufficient is conveyed. We are in a low tone of mind when we would gladly cling to the professional mark; such clinging marks the tone. Resemblance to the Lord, abundance of Christian knowledge and of Divine Spirit, is that which alone constitutes a minister of Christ.

Does this make too light of office? Does this put the office in too low a place? Alas! if we reflect, it puts it on a pinnacle too high for any of us to venture to look at it, as if occupied by himself. To be one with Christ, who is one with God! We fear to aspire to it. Yet in some measure this must be ours. In no other way are we true Christian ministers. Likeness to Christ is the rule. The rule is absolute. Just as we see it departed from—as the spiritual character of the ministry is materialised, and the official elevated—so we see the decadence of churches. The history of churches has always been dependent on the spirituality of their ministry; as this has become low, they have become materialistic, and the Church has assumed the character of a worldly kingdom. Those conversant with the working of spiritual power will tell us that none but spiritual qualifications are of any real value to the ministry, that its very outward respect depends on these, that in the evil day nothing else will exalt it. In troublous times mere office, however dignified, has, we know, but little consideration. Nay, those who exalt it most are generally—as indeed we might expect from their not being themselves spiritually minded—the first to throw it over.

On the principles which we have been laying down it will not be difficult to determine what is the place of the laity in the councils of the Church. If there be no difference, as we have said, between what are called laymen and clergymen in kind, but only one of degree indicated by signs, each individual will find a place according to his gifts, which

will disclose themselves, and make their possessor manifest. It will not do to say to a (so-called) layman, "I am a clergyman, you are a lawyer; attend to law, I will attend to Christianity;" for all are called to be Christians. Yet some set office and special work may be assigned to each. In the ordinary service of the Church we ourselves recognise the bishop as the chief teacher and administrator of affairs, that is, of the Church or diocese at large, the parochial clergy of their parishes, and the diaconate (originally) of temporal affairs. The original aspect of the diaconate has been abandoned, and the temporal affairs are now managed by churchwardens and similar officers. In churches non-established this is done by means of public societies and associations. But the great question is, What is or ought to be the position of the laity and the clergy in the councils or synods of the Church? Are these solely to consist of bishops, or of clergy and some office-bearers? If not, how are they to be arranged? This is the great question of the day for our Church. We have seen that in the beginning all members of the Church seem to have been present, and to have acted together; and as nearly as we can approach to that example, retaining the principles which we ourselves (in an Episcopal Church) adopt, this is the order which we have approved among ourselves.* The bishop calls the synod of his diocese, and all the licensed clergy and certain officials are present; all male communicants may also attend, but at present

* Argyll Diocesan Synod, at Rothesay, April 20, 1870.

none of these have votes. In such assemblies it might be well to call together all male communicants, giving all a vote on every question, but securing the benefit of official experience by requiring a joint action of the majority of the official votes; the initiative of calling to be with the bishop. This would enable the Church to command the assistance and assent of all her members, and provides that no operative action should take place without such assent. The bishop to have the initiation of all measures, as being the representative or *persona* of the Church or diocese, and its originating power. An initiative we consider to be of a more paternal and less offensive character than a veto, preventing the stirring up of evil passions which a veto, however wisely exercised, seldom is able to settle or to heal.

It is desirable that there should be distinct offices in the Church, and provision for all her members to have part in her action and progress. It is desirable that those in office should be independent in its discharge. It may be that special offices have no higher claim than expedience; and we do not base them on any divine right, higher than intrinsic power. But, whatever their place, it is very desirable that those holding office should be supported in it, and not be interfered with by its assumption by others, or by any one attempting to discharge all offices together. Two bishops in one diocese, two rectors in one parish, two secretaries of one society, can do nothing but confuse one another; and when confusion enters an evil spirit follows,

destroying and embittering where all before was growth and sweetness. The Church, no doubt, requires enlargement and ought to encourage zeal ; but it is very desirable that regulation should have due place, the whole body from time to time revising all acts, maintaining such only as have the concurrence of the whole, and also initiating new acts. At present, too often, zealous men, directly they conceive what appears to them to be a happy idea, rush into action, and, by means of public statements, appeals, and exhortations, confuse, alarm, and sometimes amuse the Church, and, doubtless, the world. Appeals or exhortations of this sort have little permanent effect ; they may have a temporary, and sometimes a strong effect, but it is one which is ever apt to exhaust the soil, and to allow nothing to grow there for long afterwards.

As to the special work of those not in the Christian ministry, it is evident that there are multitudes of earnest Christians who, not rising up to the pitch required for the ministration of the word and sacraments, or unable from ties of business or family to devote their exclusive attention to that work, yet would gladly give much of their energy and labour to the promotion of Christ's kingdom in its various forms, without trenching on the work of those designated as in holy orders. In foreign countries such occupy themselves in works of charity, the erection of buildings, ministering to the sick. In our land and day, while the need for such assistance remains as great as ever, yet there is a want on this head and an absence of arrangement, by

which much valuable zeal and power are lost. It were very desirable, if it could be managed, that at the gatherings of the Church in synods, or by means of her recognised office-bearers, specific needs, and modes of supplying them, could be indicated, so that those zealous for good works should find occupation wherein to discharge them. At the same time, the genius of our time and nation certainly points to private and social circles as the sphere in which each zealous soul shall work, taught by love where best to bestow himself, instead of going into public labour ; and to this we must pay due regard, for we think also that the character of such occupation is most in accordance with the genius of Christianity and with the spirit of its Founder.

But let us now consider some of the special work of the Christian ministry ; and first, its great outward and visible work, dogmatic and moral teaching.

Complaints are made of the pulpit from those who fill it, that it does not meet with the response which once it met ; and again, from those who wait on it, that it is not now what once it was. No doubt there is truth in both allegations. At one time, we know, the pulpit was the great engine of popular instruction, before education was common, and when printing exercised but little power. Education and printing have lowered its place. In those days also it was the mouth-piece of much political as well as religious feeling. Now this has ceased. It is also said that now we miss the talent which once adorned the pulpit. In the present day all sorts and conditions of men are licensed to

preach ; and the majority of these are little qualified for the task. In old times preachers were selected for preaching powers much as singers are now engaged for singing powers, and went about in a similar way from place to place. There was not a settled preacher then as now in every parish. And at present we must add to this, that there is an absence of any great stirring religious questions. The true and deepest movement of our time does not lie in religion. The apostles of our day are not the twelve Apostles. Comte, Darwin, Huxley, Mill, and others, have taken their seats ; or if not the seats of the twelve, certainly of Moses and the Prophets. We do not blame the new apostles. Far from it. They are men, we believe, of truth. They have truths to tell, truths which they have discovered, of more or less value, but still truths ; and the world is anxious to hear these truths. If some of them seem to be destructive, let us remember that the cause of Siva is the cause of Brahma. We must honour truth and men of truth more than we honour men who see it not, or who defend that which they do not see to be true. We must honour a destroyer of untruth, especially if he does his work with pain to himself, and sympathy with suffering ; we must honour him more than the bolsterer up of untruth, if the one is conscious that he is in the truth, and the other has no such consciousness. At present, therefore, we must be content to have two apostles, one for physical and the other for spiritual truth. We are not, as yet, able to harmonise their respective creeds, but we believe that it can and will be done ; and, beyond this,

that, when it is done, the old Apostles will regain the ground which now they seem to have lost, and have precedence as before; for the spiritual is higher than the material kingdom, and the motive of law than law itself. The region of spirit into which our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles carry us is far above and beyond the lesser and lower sphere of the materialistic labourer. In the higher region our blessed Lord and His Apostles, by their revelation of the kingdom of the Father, have given us the laws of the spiritual kingdom, just as Sir Isaac Newton and other philosophers have given us the laws of the material kingdom,—the principle of love in the higher corresponding to gravitation in the lower. The philosophers disclose the cause of rest and motion, and the centres and orbits of the visible and limited; the Lord and His Apostles reveal the things of the invisible and illimitable.

“But the creeds,” some will say, “the setting forth of which is a specific work of the ministry, are obsolete meaningless formulæ, mere authoritative technical definitions.”

Whoever speaks of the creeds in this way fails to remember that they are the outcoming of thought and the philosophy of experienced minds, themselves of a high order, devoted to the discovery of spiritual truth, and finding what they sought in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. We speak of their general scope. Rightly understood, they afford almost all that present sceptics require. But the double refraction of the matter and spirit at present

prevents justice being done to them. If the question is asked, Do we believe salvation to be dependent upon a creed? we answer "Yes," if by salvation is meant the welfare of the soul. If, then, it be asked, "On which, or what?" we say the creeds of the Church, whatever the Church, that is, has believed from the beginning. We are ready to take, as an exponent of this, any of the forms of creed now used by the Church of England. And most Christians, we believe, will go along with us in such acceptance. Even the creed of Athanasius, although stating its principles in a very formidable way, is no doubt received in its integrity by the majority of believers. Few will deny that it is necessary for a man's spiritual health to believe that God is, and that God is a Father; that, as he believes this, his soul is in health; that, as he does not believe this, he falls out of spiritual health or his soul's salvation; and, finally, that in ceasing to believe in God and His Fatherly relation, he wanders from the right way, and perishes everlastingly as he does not realise it. And, farther, few will object to the statement that we come into this way of salvation by the Son, that the way, in short, is by Christ. Nor do many doubt that the realisation of this is in the Spirit; that it is by the Spirit, by that Spirit which, proceeding from the Father and the Son, baptizes men into a holy "fellowship" one with another, and with God; the product of which is the Church.

That outward spiritual things are the cause of inward spiritual things; that the outward Christ is the cause or

efficient of the inward Christian life ; and that the inward flourishes just as the outward is realised, few will question. Degrees of value, doubtless, may be attached to different portions of objective truth, that is, of revelation ; but its chief portions, THE creed, must be sufficiently realised to produce that spiritual result called spiritual health, or the soul's salvation. Revelation, or a creed, being supposed, we must grant that the benefit to be derived from it is by the apprehension of it, that is, of its meaning. A creed held apart from meaning can be no more than an hieroglyph or idol. And the realisation of meaning can only be attained by the action of the individual soul. Creeds cannot be beneficial, if received conventionally, or by mere submission. The imposition of a creed by force is as useless as it is improper.

If creeds, however, be only beneficial by individual apprehension, may they not be misapprehended by the individual? Of course they may ; but there is no help for this. Individual discernment is indispensable, whether there be risk of misapprehension or no. But are all able to understand the creed? Doubtless ; since the Gospel is for all, and revelation was therefore given on the supposition that all were able to receive it. It appeals to that which is common, and which, as common, is the basis of the constitution of man ; all men, therefore, are able to respond to it. Were it not so, were there no possible response, it would not be a righteous address, nor come from a just and common Father. But we believe that it comes

from Him from whom we come, and is responded to by that to which it is addressed within ourselves. Higher in degree than our spirits, it is the same in kind ; higher in parts perhaps to such an extent as to seem to amount to a difference in kind, its root is at one with ours. It appeals to all, for it has a supply for all ; but apprehension differs in individuals both in time and degree. Its meaning is realised in different degrees by different individuals, and by the same individual at different times ; there is progress in the realisation of its meaning, but its fulness is inexhaustible. Its highest peaks exhaust angelic wings, its plains are not too high for the lowest individual ; but from its plains to its heights there is a continual rise and extension, on which individuals stand according to their experience and progress. And this goes on continuously. This makes believers here to differ one from another. They differ in proportion as they realise the true meaning ; and the expression of this difference, in its different stages, is that which from time to time has convulsed and still convulses Christendom. Different stages of apprehension give different variety of expression. If properly dealt with, this difference ought not to lead to separation, for most of such expressions are but indications of different degrees of progress. We must not confound degree with infidelity. Infidelity may be present, but we must not confound difference of expression with infidelity ; it may be but a different stage of belief. All inquiry must be welcomed. Inquiry may have but vague forms of expression, but it must be welcomed as the first stage of belief ;

it must be welcomed, for it is the only real door to faith. To confound inquiry with unbelief, or to reject its discoveries at different stages because a perfect conclusion has not been reached at first, is one of the greatest but most common offences against revelation. Without inquiry there can be no real apprehension, and therefore no true belief. Conventionality is nothing, and "submission" is but a conventional form of unbelief. The Church is the product of the creeds; and the holy ministry, being the mouth-piece of the Church, is the product of the creeds also, as it is likewise the instrument of their dispersion.

The product of the creeds is the Christian life, or the Church, a body begotten of them, having no existence but what can be traced to them; its distinct existence, which can be traced, originated in historic fact, viz., in the life and death of Christ, which had their own historic record, and their antecedents equally historical in the Jewish nation. This life is an existence of a specific kind, distinct and recognisable, having a specific character traceable to a specific origin; an origin which, if considered only in relation to its earthly value, has been the most important and beneficent event on earth. If we compare the life and death of Jesus Christ with any other facts of history, we find them unapproachable in greatness, and in benefit even to this life. But they reach on, we believe, to another existence.

The life and character of Christ are reproduced in those who truly apprehend and accept them. The life of the body is like the life of its head. The Christian is like

Christ ; he is begotten into His image. As the distinctive life of Christianity can be traced to an historic fact, so the Christian life is seen to be in accordance with that fact ; the true Church is like Christ. The Christian life takes a body to itself. The creeds create a body. Themselves spiritual, they have come in many bodies ; they take bodies to themselves. We come upon the embodiment of the creeds everywhere, in every clime and place, since the death of Christ. He has left signs of His existence, of His body having been here ; various tokens, different in different times and places. Amid the ruins of some old cathedral, where the words were sung, "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ ;" among common words when we catch sacred expressions ; among Pagan tombs when we come on a Christian emblem ; on a dying bed when we hear the words of the faith of Christ ; at last, when we commit our dear ones to the earth ; or at the beginning, when we baptize our little ones into the Father's name ; when we lead the fair bride to the altar, or confirm the young man on his touch of the threshold of that world which is to be to him a battle and a march, a victory or a defeat ; when we rest in the silence of the Sabbath fields, rejoicing with the freed animals, knowing, as we do, that it is the day of the Lord ; when we listen to the Sunday bells inviting us to His table ; in all these things we recognise the traces of Christ : for all things marked with His name, the old monks, even the poor Pope himself (the shadow, too often the usurper, of His name), are significant and vocal, outcomings of the creeds,

marks of Christ's body, the revelation of a city, a city not of our building, but a true city, with true foundations, without divisions, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, whose distinction is that it is without distinctions, that it lives according as it is so, reversing the conditions of earthly kingdoms, and thriving by that which destroys them, a kingdom without material or exclusive boundaries, not constituted by earthly elements, neither by water nor by blood, not made with hands, a Jerusalem which is from above, and is the mother of us all.

It is evident that such a city can receive no maintenance from earth, that it cannot be maintained by temporal means, or, strictly speaking, cannot be connected with earthly ties, and is independent of them. To read the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, and connect it with earthly property or payment, seems impossible. Yet the connection has been made, and Christianity is supposed to be benefited by the connection. Law, Physic, Divinity (as Christianity has been termed), are classed together as equal and similar professions or trades. It is a grotesque and misleading conception.

But, on the other hand, Christianity has been considered an assistance to good government, and, as such, a desirable thing to be recognised and fostered by the State. It has been judged right that a nation, *as such*, should show its allegiance unto God ; that its symbols of power should be received at the hands of a minister of religion ; that means should be provided for Christian instruction, the worship of

God, and the use of sacred rites for the solemn events of humanity. Temporal aid for such purposes, no doubt, Christianity can receive ; and in all ages assistance has thus been given to religion.

In our day, however, the question has arisen, Can such aid be bestowed by a nation or people not united in matters of religion ? Can it be so given as to represent the views of all in any common form ? That is the question now before this country. Hitherto it has been possible to do this ; to have, that is, a religion established (as it is called) by the State, either by a majority impelling a minority, or from the absence of any strong feeling against such an establishment. But now it is supposed to be doubtful if this can much longer be the case. Strong feelings exist in behalf of different aspects of religion, and some adverse to all religion ; and it appears to many nowadays improper that, in such a matter, a minority should be compelled to render unwilling aid to a majority. Present symptoms forebode that increasing inquiry and the multiplication of different stand-points of view will eventually make it difficult to retain such an establishment, and impossible to conceive of a form which would unite the suffrages of all men, even supposing they were agreed that an establishment of religion were desirable ; and the stream of tendency now sets from various quarters and for various reasons strongly against the principle itself of a State establishment of religion.

Is, then, the end of Church Establishments at hand ? Must those things be destroyed which have so much tended to make

our country that which it is? Our national homage to God, our common church and common altar, the common bell summoning all to prayer, the ancient font, the ancestral tombs, the graves of our households, the familiar pastor, the familiar choir, the well-known humbler officials, the parish worship and the parish joys, the parochial care of the pastoral ministry of England, that Establishment, too, in Scotland, to which belongs the praise of first fighting and winning the great battle of civil and religious liberty in the dark and gloomy days of domestic tyranny, not only for herself, but for others also, yea, for Great Britain at large ;—are all these things to be destroyed ?

All we can answer is—Things establish or disestablish themselves. If anything cannot stand by its own strength, by that which is its own merit, no external power can establish it. This is as true of Churches as of other things ; and, sooner or later, the fact will reveal itself in results. All we can do, if we desire to establish a common religion, is to offer true religion, which no doubt is common, and not difficult to find or define. All true religion is one ; and we well know what true religion is. Christ is the true religion, the Christ in man's heart. It seems possible to have established Churches on this one foundation, if we allow of degrees in Christ, avoiding that which is contrary to Christ.

But in the meantime what is to be done? Nothing hurriedly ; for alteration is a serious thing. Establishments, even as they are, are in the main good. The connection

of money-payments with Christianity in any form may be anomalous ; but Establishment does more than other methods to remove objections on this score. Doubtless even they tend to make religion a paid and professional thing ; yet on the whole their working, we believe, is beneficial. Difficult as it is at present to maintain the unity of a body of which the leading members are frequently at the opposite poles of theological thought, we believe that it will be impossible when State assistance is removed.

The Episcopate has been blamed for its shortcomings in this matter. We are not of those who think that the office of a bishop is best fulfilled by the use of penalties. We do not think that the great fathers and bishops of the Church became great by such use. They became great by other things, mainly by showing a more excellent way, a higher light. Yet we are ready to say that bishops should be active against error with all lawful weapons. But we are sure that if bishops have been inefficacious when assisted by the State, they will be a hundred times more so when deprived of that support. Apart from State-connection, every bishop and congregation will be free to lay down the law for themselves ; and it is idle to suppose that any law can so be laid down, as that every Churchman will yield obedience to it. Every one in such a case will be the Church, and decide what his rule shall be. Questions, great and small, will ever be decided differently by different men. Where then will the rule be found ? The present supposed rule of the Church of England is general councils, arbitrarily

selected by herself ; but this rule was found to be inoperative at the late Episcopal council at Lambeth, when it was found impossible to decide what these councils should be. And can any one Church draw up a confession which shall be general or even be expressive of the faith of all its own members ? It is impossible. Variations in the sense of language alone would suffice to prevent such standard, if agreed upon, lasting as such for any length of time. The Presbyterian Confessions, it may be said, have preserved a certain unity ; and to some extent this is true. But we do not think that their Confession can long avail for the preservation of unity ; for it is increasingly evident that the Confession of Faith, when brought into conflict with the religious and secular progress of the age, is more and more falling into the categories. The Presbyterian Churches have, however, this advantage, that their creeds or confessions are out of sight of the people, and as all things are practically in the hands of the officiating minister, he can fashion the service to better things than those in their "Confessions ;" whilst England labours under the disadvantage that all her most questionable positions are ever put most prominently forward. We therefore do not believe that unity either of organisation or of doctrine, in an outward and authoritative form, is possible, especially in England, if the State-connection is withdrawn.

External unity is possible alone on the Roman theory, that is, by having one certain and visible centre, communion with which is indispensable. The State-connection at present

acts, to some extent, in this way in England. If that be removed, as there is nothing else that answers to a central authority, there is nothing to hinder the Church of England, so far as external unity is concerned, from going to pieces. At all events a great disruption must take place, with great loss both to Church and State ; for surely, were there no other loss, yet to lose the common observance of sacred days and sacred places, even if such non-observance be a spiritual rise to the few, will be, at all events in the first instance, a great evil to the many. This should even be remembered by all thinking and well-disposed men who are not Christians ; and those among Christians who press for disestablishment, seeing in it, as they say, a higher mind and more excellent way, should not forget that to the multitude, at all events in the first instance, it is a lower and less excellent. If increased zeal is better than conventionalism,—and that there will be an increase of zeal among the *religious* on the dissolution of Establishments we do not doubt,—still the non-recognition of religion by a nation as a nation is in itself a decadence, and one for which the increased zeal of individuals can ill compensate.

But a time of change is probably inevitable, and much vicissitude. Time itself presses on changes among the Churches in this country. Late events in Parliament show that ere long it will be impossible to retain the consecrated ground of the parish for any one aspect of the Christian faith, or even perhaps for the Christian faith at all. The one house of the Father in every parish is to be converted into

many. The parish bells will no longer ring in the parish harmoniously, as of old, to the Common Prayer of England, for which George Herbert, her sweet singer and country parson, in dying, asked: "O, sir, the prayers of my mother, the Church of England; no other prayers are equal to them." If still there remain a parish, there will yet be no "*persona*;" every one will have, and must make, a *persona* for himself. In that day of difficulty we shall see one select the Anglican, another the Evangelical, another the Roman, but the old great type of the one Christ will have departed. And surely with the passing away of the Church of England a great thing will pass away—a greater than when the Chancellor of Scotland, in signing the deed of Union, said, "the end of an auld sang"—an auld sang indeed, but as lovely as old, with all its faults wondrously beautiful; which has, we believe, in its time sung more souls into the heavenly kingdom than any other; and which likewise has had no mean part in raising up and maintaining a mighty earthly empire, where manly piety and Christian gentleness have gone hand in hand.

It is impossible, perhaps, to maintain the establishment of a Church which admits of such variety of teachings and discipline as does the Church of England. But it is less possible—if such a thing can be—to establish one more restricted. And it would be deeply to be regretted were a Church established in which more minute definitions were imposed. Some no doubt think otherwise; for the present agitation against establishment has been largely occasioned

by those who, not having been able to obtain decisions according to their own views, have exerted themselves to procure a dissolution of the present connection between Church and State so as in some way to obtain the erection of a law of limit, which they themselves should lay down. But it remains to be seen whether freedom from State-connection, and the consequent possibility of laying down a limited law, will have the effect of promoting that greater amount of truth and unity in the Church which such persons anticipate. We believe that the reverse will be the case, and that greater division and aberration will ensue ; for dissolution of State-connection means, in truth, separation of the lay and clerical elements, and it is hardly to be supposed that the latter, which is the motive power, will cease to operate, or will operate in unison within itself, when the former, which is the moderating principle, is removed.

Liberty for the Church no doubt is desirable. But do those churchmen who now contend for disestablishment desire liberty in truth ? Do they desire independence of judgment to prevail, or a new law ? The conditions they require do not and cannot exist in any Church which allows of private judgment. Wherever the principle of private judgment is admitted absolute uniformity is unattainable. But private judgment is allowed by the Church of England. It is probable, therefore, that this will not long be tolerated by those who have been pushing on in the path described.

Of course such prohibition must identify them with another

Church, to which their principles belong—the Church of Rome. Everything must go to its own place. Many, no doubt, will draw back from this. Many shrink from pushing principles to a conclusion; many see not that this is the conclusion of the principles in question. But the end will show. In the first confusions arising from the separation of Church and State, Rome will seem to many the easiest solution. Some have already without obligation embraced the Roman solution. But we are much mistaken if such have thereby found a real solution of their difficulties. Although it is alleged that there is,—there is no certainty on Roman principles. Religious light, like all light, must be and is its own only sufficient witness. No doubt the facts of revelation, so far as our first acceptance of them is concerned, rest on outward authority; but not on the authority of the Church of Rome; and we must go on to apprehend the meaning of them by their own light, otherwise they are of no benefit to us. But Rome does not allow apprehension by the individual. She will not let light be its own witness. She does not allow light to be light, and therefore, strictly speaking, does not allow in truth the direct action of revelation or of the Holy Spirit on the individual. She is thus one-sided. Her action is imperfect. She does not herself believe in the true sense of belief. Rome, as Rome, is and must be sceptical; for she cannot really believe because she does realise individually. If she did, if she saw the light as light, the light by its own light, she would see that no other thing was needful to ensure belief. There is no real life

therefore in Rome, because no real experience of belief. She does not stand on a sufficient foundation. She cannot, therefore, be a true refuge. All reality is against her. And not only are her principles insufficient—insufficient for their upholders, who die out under their influence—but they disappear as untrue when brought into competition with higher principles. The religion of the New Testament, when examined, discloses a different and superior religion to that of Rome; the Roman dies out before it, and therefore Rome dislikes the New Testament. It is impossible for those who have once accepted revelation, as known by its own light, ever to fall back to the religion of Rome. Roman illumination,—that is, “submission” to a creed by pressure, and apart from the free action of the individual soul—is ever found to pale before the true and real light. Her mode of belief destroys, in fact, the conditions of spiritual life. Such a religion cannot in the end endure. As in the beginning the religion of the New Testament overcame all heathen religions, so Christianity will overcome all corruptions of itself. Rome, by her corruptions, hastens her own dissolution. However buoyant she at present may seem to be, it is plain that a religion which opposes authority to reason, of which morality is not the basis, and which charms in inverse proportion to apprehension by the understanding, cannot endure eternally. Nay, ere long, it will probably be as difficult to discover a member of the Roman Church (true to her present principles) as a Druid or Fire-worshipper. Rome is worked out. The experience of nations and of

individuals equally declare this. The city of Rome is now but the receptacle of ruins and wrecks of governments and churches, of which her principles have been the ruin, empty exuviae from which the life has departed, the shells of effete monarchies and churches. On the contrary, Christianity based on the principles of freedom and light, is on the increase; and that the victory will remain with this there is no doubt, thank God.

Rome may perhaps reap some fruit from the disestablishment of the Church of England. But the great result of disestablishment will not be in that direction. The first great consequence, in all probability, will be the subdivision of existing religious bodies into a greater number of parts; afterwards, by natural selection and elective affinities, first a disintegration, and then a re-union, of the existing religious denominations. No doubt, we have already enough of variety. In every parish, and in every petty town, there are now three or four little churches, in juxtaposition, differing in no essential point, yet contending and competing with one another. But at present there is no remedy. We must be worse, ere we are better. We are no enemy to freedom of trade, or to the belief that the best article will ever ensure the best market, and we would extend this principle freely to religion, in which, no doubt, it is possible to know, and to have, the best. It will we believe eventually work to unity. The very divisions which already exist among Protestants are not real divisions, but are only on the surface. Our religious distinctions in this country

are not deep, that is, in essentially religious things. Our ecclesiastical divisions are, as we have said, more the result of social than religious causes, the result rather of difference of education and family history than of aught else. Our religious distinctions follow the gradations of society. In Scotland, for instance, Episcopalians, as a rule, form the upper, Established Presbyterians the middle, and other Presbyterian subdivisions the lower classes of society. It is not probable that any great change will take place in this respect on the removal of Establishments. If we expect at first an intensification of distinctions, and then a still greater variety of divisions, it is only preparatory to a final conclusion that, as the infinite variety of nature signifies but one God, so the various forms of worship and polity, among Christians, signify but one Christ, and that, with various forms, there is but one communion; for really different Churches must signify really different Gods.

But whether this consummation will ever find itself again in one common form, with one officiating minister the same to all, it is hard to say. Dead nations do not live again, and the past conditions of churches seem vanishing away. Nay, some signs indicate that a professional ministry and a salaried priesthood are also coming to an end, and that the distinctiveness of a professional ministry is passing away also. Preaching is now open to all, and practised by many not clergymen; and if the Sacraments are still restricted in their administration, to require a ministry for these alone seems to be a thing not likely to be held necessary.

The truth, when preached, is the same from all, and sacraments, if administered but as seals of this, will follow validly from the hands of those by whom the truth is preached.

It may be, therefore, not merely that the removal of State Establishments is impending, but that we are on the verge of the in-coming of a day of higher spiritual things, that a day is coming, yea, the day when the ministry itself shall merge in that which is its object—all being kings and priests; when the ministry shall cease, as a separate business, by all men knowing the Lord. Let us hope and pray for this. Some signs of such a coming are to be seen. The rapid development of the material world makes us hope for a similar progress in the spiritual; and there are some indications of this being begun, indications of growth which must not be confounded with indications of decay. If we are, as we are, in the midst of a passage from one thing to another, there is a time when the old landmarks are lost; but the disappearance of food goes to make up the body. The old ministry may have to some extent fulfilled its purpose. Let us not suppose that our past ministry has all been meaningless. Too often, perhaps, we are tempted to do so. In our rounds of visiting the sick, burying the dead, baptizing the young, praying, preaching, it seems at times that we but labour in vain, bury our money in the earth never to see it again; that our lives are purposeless, our work a dream; one event equally happening to all, to the wise and foolish, the Christian and unchristian.

But it is not so. This is but depression. At times we have had higher visions, when the heavens were opened and the Son of man appeared, and God talked to us as to Abraham, and the Spirit helped or hindered, and the presence and pressure of God was a power about which we had no doubt, its reality and meaning being borne in upon us in language too great to be uttered. We have had such moments, doubtless. Yet on the whole our lives have seemed like those of other men, our work grey and colourless. As winter forms the bud and night prepares the day, the blessed words are no doubt said to us, "Seemeth it a small thing unto you that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel to bring you near unto Himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?" But we have not believed or realised them. What, then, if we were to be rebuked for our stupidity and unbelief, by an appearance of that which we said we expected, but did not expect, approaching in another way perhaps, but in a real, a far more real way than we expected? The day may be at hand, not the day we expected, but a true and real day, the reappearing of the Son of man, the rising of the sons to the Father! Signs appear. The old order changeth, no doubt for a higher. It ever is thus in physical things, it must be so in spiritual. The road is superseded by the railway, speech by the press, writing by the telegraph. May not the ministry itself come to be exercised in another way, but with greater

results than before? Everywhere we see an increase of thought. Printing is the great organ now of the utterance of conviction; the pulpit is being absorbed by the press; and so laymen discharge the functions of clergy. Is this an evil, an untoward forwardness? Is it not rather the prevalence of greater amount of Christian life and intelligence? We must not, as clergy, grudge this new condition; we are called to consider the times and to adapt ourselves to them, to become all things to all men, by all lawful means to promote the knowledge of God; and as we love men, we shall seek to do so. Alteration and progress are in the order of God's government. Change and advance everywhere indicate that the work of the Christian ministry is to keep pace with other things, and to expand itself beyond the ways and methods of its past. If more temporal aid be required than before, it will not slacken by such change, nay, it will be augmented, although it come by other channels. The still growing power of the printing press, the extension of letters, the requirements of education, the increase of objects of knowledge, demand expositors, conveyance, and functions beyond any which sufficed in times past, and prophesy greater necessities and fulfilments in the time to come. Yet the new will but be the development and extension of the old. Past experience points to this. The introduction of machinery does not diminish human handiwork; it but raises its character. Railways do not diminish transport; they but absorb and elevate the old methods, while they increase the amount transported. Old are ever being transformed

into new and greater activities, and substitutionary into personal relations.

Meanwhile things which have fulfilled their use will doubtless disappear. The things of which the inward life is gone cannot be maintained by addition from without: nothing can be established from without if its internal force has ceased; sooner or later it disappears or disestablishes itself. No external support can save it. Wealth, rank, ecclesiastical office, when their life or internal support goes, soon go also. When, for example, the right use of property is neglected, or nobility of conduct ceases, no artificial laws can retain wealth, or maintain rank; they have abolished themselves. Hierarchies which do not reveal the heavenly, vanish from the earthly; in losing their divine light, they lose their earthly might. If such are disestablished they must blame themselves. Work performs itself. When realities pass into signs, soon the signs vanish away. "Everything" (to use a vulgar but powerful expression) "must stand on its own bottom." If it has none, it cannot stand; it will only stand in proportion as it has it. Materialistic philosophy realises itself in practice. Society and the Church are remodelled by it. Whether we dislike it or not, facts accomplish themselves; and as the process is ever towards reality, it is to be welcomed. It will, when rightly understood, be welcomed; for all reality is love. Blessed is he who can look on the face of things and discern this in them; for then he sees the only One.

Many, no doubt, are now fighting a losing battle who

deserve to win were their cause better. There are those who, finding themselves in the front of the battle, in the front positions of wealth, aristocracy, and hierarchy, have not only to maintain their own posts, but the posts of others who have deserted them—an enormous number—deserters and defaulters who are the causes of all loss by change. Honour to those who fight this double battle; the two-fold honour paid to heroes and to saints! They inherit no mean crown, which is equally theirs whether or not victorious.

But how is the Church of England to be maintained if disestablishment takes place?

No doubt what is called the Voluntary system best fulfils the economical conditions of supply and demand, and the regulation of price in proportion to labour: it also allows the full exercise of freedom, and when its offering is given with reverent thankfulness, and accepted as proof of the value placed on that which is supplied, nothing can be more proper or suitable than such a principle; and it alone, probably, offers any guarantee against the alienation of money-payments from their original object. But experience of its working demonstrates that its disadvantages over-ride its advantages. Practically it degenerates into something to which the word "Voluntary" can scarce apply, and which is detrimental to the purity and to the dignity of its objects. Its ordinary working, by means of collections for stipends, seat-rents in churches, bazaars, and sales, is as painful to the delicate mind, as it is injurious to spiritual Chris-

tianity. Competitive churches, competitive clergy, competitive congregations, with the emulation, wrath, ill-will, vanity, and pride, which these bring in their train, who does not know, who is familiar with that which is called the "Voluntary system?" Not only does it risk the faithfulness of ministers, and tempt congregations to become oppressors, but it leads to humiliations of dignity to which no clergyman or flock possessed of gentlemanly feeling (which is no faint shadow of Christianity) should ever be exposed. Many now subject to it are too old to hope for deliverance from it, and are unable to couple with it any other mode of provision; none, however, who can escape from, or be independent of it, should remain or become subject to it. Its success, as experienced in special localities, is no fair criterion of its rule. The general experience of it is, we suspect, everywhere disheartening. There are no doubt illustrious examples of voluntary offerings, blessing the giver and the receiver; but they are exceptional cases. The Episcopal Church of Scotland, for example, is wealthy, numbering in its ranks the wealthiest and noblest in the country; yet its revenues are absolutely insufficient for the duties required of it. This, however, may be owing to an *economical* reason, to the financial fact that the aid of the few, however liberal in the bestower, yet is not enough for the receiver, and never equal to the aggregate amount of the offering of the many. At times the working of this system in the North borders on the grotesque. One reads a statement by a northern prelate that when all

his income was added together, and the necessary deductions made for expenses, he was some pounds out of pocket. Peers of the realm and men of wealth attend meetings, in all good faith, in behalf of local clergymen, and are seen to be not ashamed to ask for aid from societies instituted for the assistance of congregations "struggling with pecuniary difficulties." Clergymen are found fault with by wealthy churchwardens for the expenditure of some extra shillings on door-keepers; yet £100 per annum is the average sum for which all these struggles are made,—that sum the average, because clergymen can be obtained for that money. If it be pointed out that a clergyman cannot live on that amount with a wife and family to provide for, in all probability it will be replied, "He had no business to marry," while the speaker is yet loud, most likely, against the vices of an unmarried clergy. It is a system, we believe, injurious to all parties, leading to that which is of the greatest detriment to religion, demand for money from an unwilling people, and to the degradation of the clergy. To have to look to human patronage at all is ever destructive of genuine life; to regard "men's persons because of advantage" is injurious to moral honesty and peace of mind; yet these are almost necessary incidents of the Voluntary system.

Endowment, although a branch of the Voluntary system, is a means less objectionable than the aspect which we have considered, as it removes the money-question still farther off. It is not unobjectionable, because it *does* connect religion

with money ; and there are other things to be said against it. It cannot secure a perpetuity of energy or of the principle itself for which the endowment was bestowed. It does not, as by many is supposed, free the Church from connection with the State. Where property is, the State comes in, for property and the State are one. Religion, when connected with property, is ever connected with the State ; for the law of the land takes cognisance of acts of religion in connection with property, and binds or looses in this matter just as much in the case of non-established as of established Churches : the operation alone, in time and form, is different. Yet Endowment has many and great advantages over other methods of sustentation, if State support be withdrawn from the Christian ministry, and money-support be still required. By it the worship of God is not lowered, clergy and laity are not humiliated, the trade and commercial aspect of the Voluntary system is removed ; and were State Establishments abolished, to this method of provision, we believe, the greater part of England would have recourse. Nor do we doubt that the principle of Endowment would fully replace in time all that had been lost ; for if State assistance were withdrawn, and matters were left as in Ireland (the parish churches and parochial buildings in the hands of their present possessors), there are few parishes in England where the lords of the manors and the inhabitants of the parishes together would not readily come forward and make up all, and more than all, which had been taken away. There are few localities,

we believe, where this would not take place, and where the work could not easily be accomplished. One supreme effort, supplemented, if need were, by after legacies or anonymous offerings, would, in most cases, be all that would be required : required, that is, to free the House of God from becoming a house of merchandise, and its frequenters from anxiety and future claims for the maintenance of their religion. Surely a reverent piety would rush in to do more than make up for that which had been taken away ; multitudes, we trust, would present themselves with joyful eagerness, offering themselves and their possessions as servants and sacrifices to the Lord, as in those early ages when houses were eagerly dedicated to God, and the land covered with pious foundations, or as in those still earlier days when all things were common to the disciples, and those who had houses and lands sold them and laid them at the Apostles' feet. May it not be that God is going to call out again some such glad time as this by means of change in a previous trial, so that the faith may be revived, which is now half dead ? How sanctifying and blessed a thing to see the Church which we have refounded, to hear the bells to which we have again given voice, and to think of the worship and divine service as again made sure by ourselves, and this from no vain feeling, but one of reverent piety and thankfulness ! If inferior to the prestige and benefit which an old and general Establishment possesses, and the strength which habit gives to religion, still some such process as this would go far to make

up for the old Establishment, and would, at all events, be better than a maintenance of religion by the "Voluntary system," with its Sunday collections, seat-rents, bazaars, and begging books. If Disestablishment takes place, we trust and believe that a great outburst in the shape of Endowment will also take place, and extend itself to communions now under the Voluntary system, and that this gain at all events will be ours, and general.

But there is yet another way, that by which the ministry supports itself by the private revenues or the private labours of those exercising it, which is probably destined to be the ultimate and best method for its sustentation. It comes most near to the primitive model, and is most akin to the genius of Christianity. No doubt it is written that he who preaches the Gospel may live of the Gospel; that the workman is worthy of his hire; and there other passages to the like effect. But we also hear the great Apostle say that he "used none of these things," nay, that it were better for him to die than do so: "that he laboured with his hands night and day, that he might not be chargeable to any of them,"—and this "lest he should make the Gospel void," as no doubt it often is "made void" by money-payments. Whoever will attentively study St. Paul's Epistles, especially those addressed to the Corinthians, will see that money-payment, however sanctioned by him, as a practical man, under particular circumstances, does not enter into his ideal of the Christian ministry. A ministry like this no doubt infers a greater zeal than any now generally possessed. But then

may not the question be, whether a less zeal is of any efficacy? May not our present inefficiency be from want of zeal? The work of the ministry to be successful must have zeal. It was at first so successful because it had so much of it. Its work was hard, it was perilous, it was fatal to many; it could not have existed but because of its excessive zeal. It was this that "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions." It was zeal which laid the Christian foundations; it was this which overcame the world. The first Christians "had cruel mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain by the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy." Their zeal saved the world, although it destroyed them. The question was not, What is the living worth? but whether they would be stoned! They went, and fell. It was long ere money became the question of the ministry. Truth can be maintained without it. Nay, truth can only be maintained as truth apart from money considerations. Life itself was not to enter into the question, lest it should disturb it. Knowing that death was probably before him, yet St. Paul cried to those who would dissuade him from going to Jerusalem, "What mean ye, to weep, and to break my heart? I am ready, not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem." And our Lord, to a similar dissuasion said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." The

relations of the ministry at first were assuredly unconnected with money ; it was a question of life itself. They had not to consider the question of Establishment or Voluntaryism, but life itself ; and they ventured it. They did not even esteem it ; for their Master's sake, they laid it down ; and that joyfully. Their zeal led them to this, their zeal established the faith. The question now is, Will less zeal maintain it ? Does an Establishment admit of such zeal ? You say, "These were saints." Yes, but they became saints by what they did. If we are not saints, it is from not acting as such ; we miss the way. But if it requires a saint to convert, if zeal like theirs is required for a true ministry, are we not altogether off the line when we have come to consider the money-question at all ? We believe that a great truth underlies all this, and that to disconnect Christianity from money-payments is needful if we would have it in its truth. Living by ordinary industry, or on its private property, a ministry so living would free religion from its most invidious and unreal aspect, and from the dead weight of a number who betake themselves to it for a livelihood. It is scarcely to be doubted that the money relation to Christianity, even in its least hurtful form (as seen exercised in the parishes of England), lies at the root of much of that feeling which begins to shake not Establishments merely, but all paid agencies of religion. If therefore money-payments cease, let us believe that it is not a worse but a better day which is coming for Christianity. We think that the ministry should prepare for this, and learn to

maintain itself by ordinary industries. At present we know that there are laws and customs which are opposed to this ; but these must vanish with the pressure of necessity. Beyond doubt some of the abuses connected with money-payments are enough to alienate multitudes from Religion. Who shall say that the sale of livings, the exercise of patronage apart from the requisite gifts of God (as known or required to be known by ecclesiastical patrons), are not among the chief causes of the present shaking of Establishments? Not that patronage in itself is hurtful. Many high and pure men have been called and chosen by it ; but such a mode of obtaining "the cure of souls" is surely abnormal and evil. And besides, as touching the connection of religion with property, what spiritual body could withstand the influx of that huge multitude who take to the ministry of the Church of England on the idea that her high worldly place will give them the rank of gentlemen, and who seek her ministry as a means of elevating themselves in the social scale? It is not the scale of rank or wealth which is the cause of the evil, or the amount of these in connection with the ministry which is the point. A reduction of their value would make no difference. To reduce rank or payment to comparative meanness does not insure greater purity ; it only brings forward candidates from a lower walk in life. The only real cure is in the absence of money-payment entirely, in the cessation of the connection of money with the setting forth of the principles and practices of Christianity. "But were

this attempted," it will be said, "the Church will come to nothing." Does not a false use of the word "Church" lie at the root of this assumption? Mankind, by a false and materialistic use of that word, has long made a travesty of Christianity. Christianity is a spirit, a spirit which informs a body, which makes a body just as it is so informed. It is not made by a body; and money is but another word for body. If the spirit remains, it will soon create a body. But body will create no spirit. Is, then, the spirit gone? Are Christians now so destitute of the spirit as to look to money as a *sine quâ non*? Are we now so inferior to our fathers, so unequal to their work, that poverty is to prevent our preaching or setting forth Christianity? Is the want of a sufficient stipend to terminate the Gospel? Have we no hope of Christians undertaking sacred functions save for money? Have we not read of thousands and thousands of old whose vows were "poverty," to whom the very charm of their calling was want, for Jesus' sake? There have been ere now tens of thousands of men and women, "poor monks and nuns," as we call them, whose object was to be poor for Christ's sake, and whose joy was to do His work without money and without price, that they might be like Him who was the Father and Brother of the poor. Men have done this in every country and at every time, yea, for false religions. Hindoos and Mahometans do it now daily, sacrifice all they have, and life itself, for their religion. Are we worse than they? Is Christ less than Mahomet or Bramah? Is our stipulation

for a certain competence, an adequate provision, a sufficient money-maintenance, a minimum for preaching Christ, our one thing needful? Alas! grasping at these things, do we not lose more than we gain, money as well as all other things? Is it not because of this, and our having allowed ourselves to be brought to this, that present evils have come upon the clergy, that an average of £100 a year is offered to a clergyman, because "for that sum a clergyman can be secured?" Are we not encouraging people in evil when we sell ourselves for "so much," or rather for so little? Men think they do very well when they subscribe a small sum to have a clergyman, who yet willingly give hundreds of pounds for a horse or a shooting. And this because the market value of the one is so much higher than of the other! Are we not, by thus lowering ourselves, lowering holy things also? One would be tempted, at such offerings, to use St. Peter's words, "Thy money perish with thee," were it not that it is in general not want of will, or parsimony, but use and wont which cause the laity (as we call them) to do such things and make such offerings. Are not we ourselves the cause? Why do we submit to such arrangements? There is no secular industry from which, if the same time and talent were bestowed, we should not obtain a return many times greater than we do from a ministry situated as ours is at this present. Putting then the ministry to money-value, we have so cheapened the market that the very misery of the returns will probably lead to a cure. May it be so,

and the Good Lord hasten the time, and strengthen us until it be accomplished !

One word more concerning Disestablishment. "Who," some may ask, "can suppose the Church of England, that great Establishment, that great building under whose walls so many have found shelter, and so long, to be in danger?" None, we reply, but close and disinterested observers. To these, however, it has long been evident that a composite body like that Church, however happy in its constitution in times of rest, is exposed to double peril if a time of shaking comes ; for then the components are apt to be severed, each falling to its own place. The opposite systems of theology combined in the system of the Church, the *ex opere* doctrines introduced into her formularies by Bishop Overall on the one side, and the *per fidem* definitions of the Articles on the other, if they be pitted against each other, are mutually destructive. This has begun to be the case. At present there is a great revival of what are termed the Catholic, or *ex opere*, doctrines ; and their upholders demand predominance, and a return to that theory to which they belong, that is, the theory and communion of the Greek and Roman Churches. Ruinous as such theories have proved to all Churches which have embraced them before, equally ruinous will they prove to those who embrace them now. Those who are advocating such a course now in England we believe to be the immediate causes of the Disestablishment which is threatened. Their theory will not stand. The pseudo-materialism which they teach, and

which has none of the proofs of a true materialism, will go to the wall, we do not doubt, like a potsherd before the advance of true materialism, when it rises in its wrath against it. But, in like manner, the fatalistic definitions in the Articles, if taken alone, are equally remote from stability; for fatalistic limitations of God's justice must shut the door against increase, and sap the foundations of permanence. We are not ignorant, on the one hand, of the difficulties which beset the drawing of a line where that which produces is separated from that which is produced; and, on the other hand, we do not deny that, so far as this world shows, an election by God seems to exist. But neither of these single and opposite aspects of revelation is the whole of its truth. We are persuaded that the message of Christ is opposed to both single conceptions. But we believe that an eventual harmony and manifestation will be found of that message, which will combine and realise both, a harmony and manifestation for which the present shaking and removals are perhaps making a way; a nearer approach, that is, to Christ, a greater revelation of the meaning of Christ than there has yet been, the growth of time, the product of experience, the outcome of the increase in wisdom as in growth and stature of man as a whole, as the Christ of humanity—humanity, as a whole, rising up to Christ—the true revelation of “the Son of man.” Something, no doubt, of this is coming, and must come. Christ cannot be put back, nor can man recede. “*He* must increase;” and Christ but increases as mankind rises as a whole.

If then we are of opinion that our present forms and establishments cannot endure, it is because we believe that better and more permanent are possible, that these are on the way to us, and that the shaking and removal, which are now taking place, are in order that that which cannot be shaken may come and remain. Religion needs reformation. Suffering, no doubt, is before the Church. Her *ex opere* aspects and her limitations of God's Fatherhood cannot remain in her heart as now. They operate as poisons. They must work their own end or the Church's; we believe they will work the former. They will work out their own exhaustion. Those who hold to the *ex opere* aspects will find by experience that they are able to build nothing; nothing which has not been already built, with greater advantages than we are ever likely to possess, and which has not always, especially at the greatest need, been found wanting; while those who hold to views of the limited love of God will find that such limitation deprives them of all true ground of rest and righteousness. When these discoveries shall have been fully made, then there will be peace and progress in the Church, but not before; for until these theories are got rid of, man, that is, whoever holds them, does not truly believe. With their removal, however, will come belief, true belief, and a Church which, if not established by the State, will establish a State itself; for verily a day is coming when men shall know the Lord at first hand, when all means shall cease, and God, no longer a mere name, labelled and registered as in a museum, shall be

realised as a nature and a Living Lord. To this we are coming, but have not yet come. Alas! to many still the *name* of God is the chief and only knowledge—a name (as in Jewish days) the chief thing—a word on a banner—a name and motto, as on the Chinese standards, to alarm and awe beholders. There are strong weeds of the old garden still throughout the world; tracks of the old serpent. Arbitrariness on the part of God, magical results from matter; these are weeds of the old garden, and have to be rooted out. As they are removed, the Church will rise, not only in England, but in the world, and the second temple outshine the first.

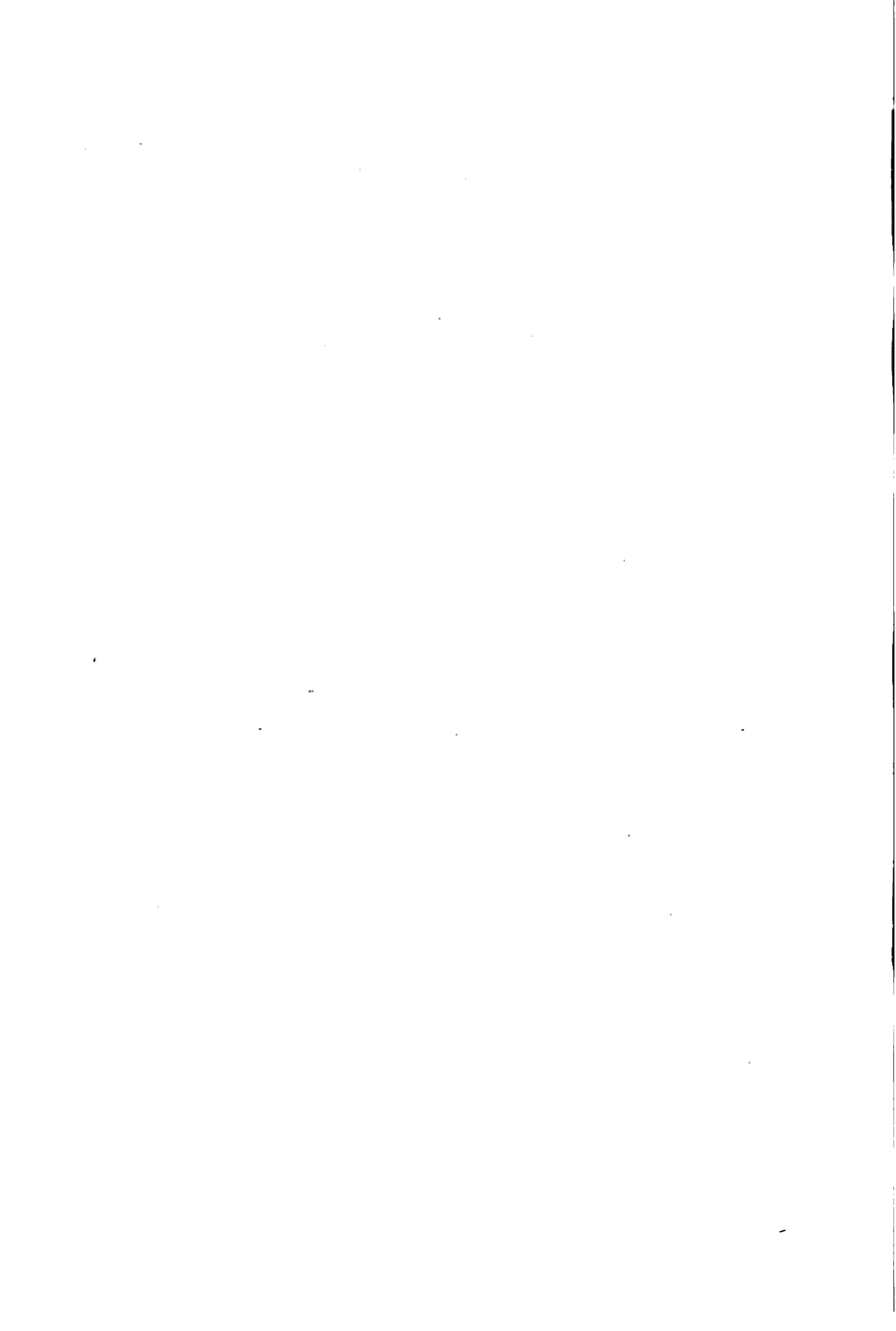
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*PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS
IN THEOLOGY*



THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

PART II.



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WE have said that the Christian' ministry must have for its root dogma, that is, the Creeds, a specific historical basis, a declaration of facts which have been revealed, facts connected with the nation of Israel, facts regarding Jesus of Nazareth. It must have for its basis a declaration of His life, death, and resurrection, the meaning of which was set before the world by His apostles, and has been conveyed to us in the records which they have left. But the dogma, if rightly understood and taught, will be no mere or bare abstract of facts : if it be apprehended by its ministers, it will not be so ; they will not merely hold up, as it were, a sheet of music, or show a hieroglyph, but will give the tune and meaning of the marks, and this meaning will have a moral and reasonable sense. If it have not a response in the moral and reasonable understanding and conscience of the hearers, it cannot have been rightly understood or delivered.

Now the Creeds remain just as they were ; the Scriptures remain, and are in the hands of all men. Why then has not the pulpit the power which once it had ? No doubt, as we have said, the increase of education, the dissemination of knowledge by printing, so that men learn more than formerly from reading and less from *viva voce* teaching, is one cause. Another cause is, that Revelation is too often so taught from the pulpit as to be no Revelation, nothing more, in fact, than the dry hieroglyphs of the text and the forms of words, with conventional interpretations, as little inculcative of meaning as the unknown alphabets of religions which have decayed and fallen from an original truth, perhaps in a similar manner. But a further cause is forgetfulness of the fact that the pulpit is intended to be as much a practical as a dogmatic chair ; a preacher is to be eminently a preacher of righteousness. We do not mean that righteousness is not preached, but that the special righteousness required is not sufficiently set forth. Here, also, as in the case of dogmas, the teaching is too apt to be conventional and meaningless ; "applications," as they are called, are made at the end of sermons ; but both they and the dogmas are so very vague and general that, as a rule, the "application" of a sermon, save it be for charity, is not more suitable to the dogma which has preceded it than to any other dogma. If the pulpit is to regain its power, this fault must be regarded and corrected, both as to dogma and its application ; and in the case of the application, the remedy is more in our own hands, because the matter is

simpler and more easily embraced. We say that the pulpit is not sufficiently occupied by the Christian ministry as spiritual physicians, or preachers of righteousness. This was the main office of the Old Prophets, it should not be neglected by the New. The Old Prophets observed and spoke of the working of eternal principles, as seen in their days. The principles are still at work ; they should be observed and spoken of in our day, with the difference, of course, suitable to time and place. We do not mean that the young divine is to stand up to rebuke his elders, but that the minister should observe the spiritual sowing and reaping of his own day, and so far as he can, without personality, encourage the sowing of good, discourage the sowing of evil seed. If a minister is concerned for the welfare of his people, he cannot but wish this ; if he loves them, he will *know* how to do it. If those of whom he is in charge are running into danger, if they are laying the foundations of their own ruin, how can he refrain from so doing ? How anxiously, patiently, and boldly do we not foresee and provide against the physical evils of our children, seeking the best air, the best food, the best medical advisers ; shall we be content to do less against evils which engender spiritual as well as temporal mischief ?

If we are brought into connection with any special class, the evils incident to that class ought to be our special study. For example, a minister may have to deal with the higher classes. He is bound in all love and faithfulness to be

useful to these as they require, in special case to be their spiritual physician, and, if need be, surgeon, and to convey prescriptions in language well understood — not in Hebrew, but English phraseology. It will have little meaning to such in our day to say, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed ; abandon Baal and Ash-toreth, and serve the Lord Jehovah ;” he must put it in other words. He must say that wealth and rank depend on eternal laws, the violation of which will destroy both ; that the nature of God, and not His name, is that which we have to seek ; that Jehovah means holiness, and as such is eternal ; that Baal and Ashtoreth mean pride and sensuality, and as such are suicidal. He is to say that no artificial laws can withstand the working of the eternal laws ; that no contrivances can keep up that of which the root is gone ; that if we would maintain the powers that be, the eternal laws must be observed ; that rank or riches cannot be retained for their possessors, if the eternal laws are violated by them. Men who live for self, making it a rule to seek that only which is pleasing, to avoid that which is displeasing, grudging trouble and the claims of duty, producing nothing, contributing nothing to the common weal, flying from shooting to hunting, from hunting to the London season, at their wits’ end to know what to do with the month of July, fencing a social circle which debars from entrance all it can, and casts off all who leave it, valuing the good things and high places of life mainly because others have them not, and though possessing them only by inhe-

ritance, not by merit, and enjoying them solely through the approval or forbearance of those who have received no such share, yet, instead of bearing an air of humility or apology, assuming towards these others an air of coldness and contempt, or it may be of patronage,—such must be faithfully told that the end of the things they abuse is not far off.

There are few things more requisite at this moment, we believe, than a judicious handling of our social distinctions. But they must be touched with care, and by competent authority. The ministry is probably a competent authority; but even for the ministry it is a difficult business, and one which requires a special capacity. At present in England society is marked off into *castes* all but as absolutely as in Hindostan, with the disadvantage that the treatment of the case, so far as it is evil, is more difficult; for the distinctions here are caused by a law which is in its essence productive of good, the law of progress, which is the cause of the greatest benefits amongst us, which indeed is the law of social life as of all other life, and without which society would stand still or retrograde. But its aberrations are fraught with evils which if not individually great yet in their united amount cause a very great degree of mischief. We believe that they are avoidable, or at least capable of great amelioration. There is, as it were, a recognised division of classes amongst us. The old or county families, the members of certain professions, and, of course, the nobility, are understood and suppose themselves to be of a higher order than those engaged in or connected with what is called

business, or manufacturing or commercial pursuits. The law which underlies the distinction, as we have said, is beneficial; therefore we must discern between the law and the aberration, and while we deal with the latter, if possible, in the way of removal, we must be careful that we do not injure the former. How can this be done? How can we distinguish the evil from the good, or mark off where the law ends and the aberration begins? We believe that it can be done. Wherever the action indicates or marks off progress, there it is the operation of the law itself; wherever it signifies obstruction or barrier, there it is the aberration. The position of the highest class indicates, as a rule, that those occupying it, or their ancestors, possessed a superior moral nature by which they raised themselves to leadership and eminence. The advantages which flow from this they reap in a freedom which allows them an exemption from attention to details and to the mere *applications* of principles. Its drawbacks consist in a tendency to rest on that which has been acquired, and to view with superciliousness the struggles of those who have not yet acquired it, accompanied by an exhibition of a serenity which is more the product of safety than the result of faith. It is a position apt to lead to selfishness, and to a disregard for others, and finally to a loss of the higher qualities themselves in an abandonment to sensual or merely pleasurable pursuits. The position of the secondary class is similar to that of the first ere its end was attained, and will probably result in the same success, to which indeed it aspires. The aspiration

and struggle within themselves are beneficial; but the second or struggling class is apt to mistake the signs of success and the appanages of rank which are its proof for the success itself, and for the higher qualities which achieve it, and to imagine that by acquiring the signs it has got that which it sought. Hence we often see a "rush" made by those termed *nouveaux riches* for distinctive marks of success, such as memberships of parliament, dress, houses, ornamentation, and showy equipages. A certain amount of these, of course, is needful for the fulfilling of the ordinary usages and requirements of the higher society; but the things themselves are not those which make that higher society or give the qualifications for it. It is the higher moral nature which gives the rank, and the outward marks are but consequences and not causes. The first creates the second, and not the second the first. The qualities are the things which ought to be sought for, since these are in truth the causes of the social success, and their preservation is the only condition of its maintenance. The qualities are integrity, courage, good temper, and, as an *acmé*, by a well-conceived expression, "sweetness and light." The Christian ministry would do good work in pointing out these things, putting both parties in the right way, showing each what their social sins are. It should teach that the first should not seek to put down, or to keep down, but should help to raise men to that which is above, to their own level, and not be jealous of them in their rising; that men of rank, and still more women, who are the great social arbiters,

should see to this, and avoid all appearance of discouraging, if there be no real intention, as often there is not any, to discourage the energy and struggle which in truth are a compliment to those who have already attained from those who are following after. Those seeking rank and wealth, on the other hand, should be told that they are not objected to for the struggle or desire, but for the assumption of the marks of that to which they have not as yet attained, or rather for an evidence of the want of that spirit which is attainment ; for *the* attainment is no doubt a higher mind and *morale*, the presence of which it is which divides men into classes, assorting them by the force of its own law. Circumstances, no doubt, affect this, different pursuits ranging men into different bodies, but it is the presence or absence of a certain *morale* which really and eventually identifies or severs classes. The higher natures instinctively recognise this ; the lower require to be taught it by experience. Accordingly, in these social differences, we find that it is not the elder but the younger who are most to blame, and also the women, in consequence of their being at present insufficiently instructed. Children often do injustice to parents in this respect, annulling by their folly the best parental intentions. A father, for example, feeling the drawbacks resulting from trade and commerce, and wishing to make his son, as it is called, "a gentleman," puts him to a leading school or university, or into a distinguished regiment. The son, not seeing that the thing to do and learn is to acquire the gentle mind, thinks his father is ashamed of

his position, and, to set things right, he himself launches into a double expenditure and a "faster" life, so becoming, as he supposes, more of a gentleman. These are errors which a little plain speaking in the pulpit, and calling things and persons by their right names, would help to rectify by the mere description of the disease. The possessors of hereditary rank and wealth should be told that a selfish conservatism, a cold superciliousness, a haughty indifference outside, and a mere superficial, conventional, and formal relation within, are high prices to pay for a calm serenity; and those who are struggling for rank and wealth should be told that jealousy, envy, and disparagement of those without, and disrespect and coarseness to those within their domestic circles, are high prices to pay for any worldly success. These aberrations would form valuable subjects for treatment by the spiritual physician, aberrations which are not the less fatal because common, and which are common, we believe, because they have not been publicly denounced. Such plain speaking would go far to redeem the pulpit from the charge of inefficacy, and to raise it from the decadence into which it has fallen, mainly from ceasing to have plain meaning, from dealing too much in generalities and vain conventionalisms.

The Christian ministry is not merely to indicate general truths, in a general way, in morals and doctrine; not merely to direct thought into speculative or doctrinal channels; still less to beat the air, making-believe with imaginary tools to till imaginary soils; it is not to harp when Rome is

burning, using, for example, ritual instrumentality, and arguments about succession, for the cure of sin ; gilding, as it were, the ceiling when powder is being put into the vaults ; it is to say, in plain language, that non-compliance with the duties and privileges of superior wealth and station cannot but lead to the rectification, and perhaps violent destruction, of all such superiority and privilege, it may be by some outburst which no merely human law will be able to restrain. When one remembers the direful misery which exists in the east end of London, and the too often meaningless, if not profligate, luxury of the west, and how little is the space which divides them, no miracle of the Old Testament seems more marvellous than that the east does not forcibly supply its needs from the superfluities of the west. Is it the police which prevents ? It is but a grain of sand in that eastern wilderness. Is it the army ? The soldiers remember that they, too, are of the people, when brought to act against them. What then hinders ? Nothing, save the voice of God in every heart, which forbids a man to do violently that which can be done by patience, or to rectify a balance which is not entirely unjust. Men know that as a rule industry and probity are the foundations of wealth, that extraordinary desert was the original cause of rank, and until these are manifestly gone from their possessors, men do not step in to rectify the balance ; nevertheless when this is seen to be the case, then they do, and will, and the old landmarks are swept away with violence.

“ But if the ministry were to use such words, would it not

be blamed," it will be said, "for putting such things into people's heads?" Alas, such things are in people's heads already, in thousands of heads—unfortunately in the wrong heads; were it possible to put them into the right heads in time, much good might be done, and much change, if not averted, at least peaceably brought about. There is a general feeling, however, that the Christian ministry ought to be as a rule Conservative, that is, a maintainer of the powers that be, of the divinity of might, the duty of passive obedience: and so, no doubt, it ought to be, and in the highest sense is, Conservative, but only of the eternal laws, not of their infringements. Such infringements in time will, of course, avenge themselves. "Why not then," it may be said, "leave them to their own working?" Nay; for a ministry that is *truly* Conservative, one which does desire to avoid change, will seek to maintain "the powers that be," and will do this not by propping them up in evil, that is, in the infringement of law, not by winking at transgression, but by warning the transgressor and assuring him that such and such things must entail an evil crop. All seeds produce their own crops: over the crop the ministry has no power, but it can help to the sowing of good, and to the prevention of the sowing of evil seed. It must guard itself, of course, against the entrance of personal feeling—and it may be misunderstood—but it *must* be faithful. Faithfulness, no doubt, will be blamed by some. The foolish will not believe its words; the half-wise will say the time and mode might have been better. But it must run

this risk, nay, the risk of worse things than this, the risk, perhaps the certainty, of the loss of all worldly things, yea, of life itself; but it must be faithful, whatever else it be. And it will be so, if Love be its foundation. The ministry must call things by their right names, and do so ere it is too late, ere the vital power is gone, the sustaining principle vanished, and nought remains but a name or empty garment, which no one can retain or restore.

In what way the ministry is to do this, how it is to fulfil its office of a Preacher of Righteousness, whether to use words of warning or entreaty, of private or public exhortation, must be a matter for each prophet himself to judge. On the whole, perhaps, entreaty and private persuasion are the most advisable. But public evils must be dealt with publicly. Yet even here, so far as possible, it will be best to use words of entreaty, to point out the disadvantages under which the great majority of men labour, the struggles of the weak, the pressure on the many. It will be well to urge the adoption of benevolent laws and remedial legislation; to dwell on the want of knowledge, the want of means, the terrible drawbacks, which are the burden of the multitude. We should speak of the many millions of brothers and sisters, of whom in infancy, undressed on the nurse's knee, no man would know one from the other, who yet start in life, once the clothes are on, so differently, one to ease and luxury, the most to toil and hardship,—brethren whose Christian name has ceased to carry brotherhood, that true brotherhood, the liberty,

equality, and fraternity, which were brought to light, and were sought also to be established, by Christ and His apostles. We have fallen from that first love, we have changed that goodly seed, which, had it grown, would have prevented revolutions and the seeking of the eternal verities by wrong ways, revolutions and seekings, however, which must continue, until the truth be recognised that every man is not only an equal man but a brother. Let us draw attention to that multitude which no man can number, which we call "the people," for whom Christ died, and of whom He is the chief; to be one of whom He came, as a poor man not having where to lay His head, the Son, a son of man; the greatest indeed of that multitude, but yet one of those of so many of whom the world is not worthy, suffering men and women, uncomplaining, hard-worked, ill-fed, earning their bread by the sweat of their brows, whose prayer for daily bread is a real prayer, who know not the use of luxuries; to whom, driving by in our luxurious carriages, we vouchsafe a gracious perhaps a pompous smile, or from whom, if they be of a *higher* rank, we turn with coldness, lest they too should climb into the seats reserved.

What shall we say, as ministers of Jesus Christ, of the social distinctions of the two great and opposite orders of rich and poor? Are we to attribute these distinctions, as we find them, to the will of God? Is it God's ordinance that many shall be poor that a few may be rich? We make no accusations. Men do not think;

that is the evil. What we have to do is not to accuse, but to get men to think. Half of the inequality of life, as in the case of Dives and Lazarus, is not because of will on the part of the rich, but from want of thought. We *are* our brethren's keeper. We *have* that responsibility; we cannot, if we would, avoid it. It should be a matter not of obligation or conscience, but of love; conscience is but the voice of the Law, love is the reflex of the Gospel; we are ministers of the Gospel. We have got to the cause, we ought to be beyond the regulator, of life. We have come to Mount Zion itself.

What steps, then, do we take to supply the needs of a world lying in wickedness and sorrow, an evil world to many, made evil, or not prevented from being so, by others? What do the prophets say? What says the ministry? Do we say much to the purpose when we teach dogma, dry duties, names speculative or technical, when we exalt ritual, and prove genealogies? If evil is coming, if evil must come, if rectification takes place without warning, who is first to blame? No doubt the watchmen. Rectifications and restitutions must and will be made. But surely *violent* rectifications are to be avoided. They may be better than the evils they assail; they *are* better, or they would not happen; but they should be anticipated by a rectification which takes place day by day, brought about by evil-producing causes being pointed out and denounced. But, alas, the pulpit has ceased to be a seat of judgment. It is despised from having become a place only for intellectual

or conventional discourse. When prophets see nothing, or speak but of things which others saw, and when moreover they do this in the language of other days, they cannot but cease ere long to be much esteemed.

Prophets were not always despised. The Old Testament prophets may not have been successful ; but they were not lightly esteemed. Yet the prophets of the Old Testament were at a disadvantage compared with those of the New ; for the religion which the New Testament reveals is far higher than that of the Old. But if there be higher truth in Christianity, why do we not see higher things than we do? Had the Christian prophets been faithful to their charge, could Europe now be as it is after eighteen hundred years of so-called Christianity? Strange, surely, in Christian Europe, to see nations keeping up standing armies against nations! Eight hundred thousand men in arms in one nation, six hundred thousand in another! And in the details of civil life we are surrounded by similar armies in plain clothes ; armies of lawyers, armies of police to prevent men preying upon one another! How strange! Yet is it not still more so that it should not be thought strange? Why is this? No doubt because the prophets have been false to their message and themselves.

Our prophets, nowadays, are too often but "professional" prophets, who are continually speaking of the church, of sacraments, of infallible men and councils ; who are ever showing us a calculus, an apparatus, a means whereby God is to be found, but who never seem to have found

Him. Had they found God, would they so exclusively seek and glorify the ways and means? Instead of bringing men nearer to God, they remove them farther from Him—moving them off from God to critical rendering, technical theology, mechanical applications. The living God and His direct government are forgotten or unknown.

Yet God is much nearer, more easily found, more simple and better, than all these things. He is not, cannot be, our God because another has found or known Him. We must find and know Him ourselves; find and know Him as the living God; know Him from His ways, know Him from experience of His word within us, know Him from His Son and from our own sonship. God lives and reigns, not apart from, but in and by His works; the natural is not one thing, and the supernatural another; the natural and supernatural are one, with distinctions but of degree; yet nature is not God, nor God nature, though the one is not apart or separate from the other. God is absolute and perfect, everywhere and always; but He suits Himself to the degrees of the creature which He made. Thus it is that in His written Word we have something suitable for the needs of all. His nature, ever the same, has to us aspects varied, in place and time, by faults of our own will, and the relative importance of laws, until opposite aspects are so far apart as to seem different in kind, whilst yet they but differ in degree. God, nowhere absent and everywhere the same, acts ever in accordance with His own character and will.

The old prophets of Israel knew all this, and said all this. They reminded men of their direct connection with the living God, who bestows reward and punishment according unto works. Men do not now sufficiently remember this, do not perhaps recognise it; and so the great prophetic office too often is no part of the ministry. Interpretations, theologies, infallible apparatus, occupy most minds and tongues, instead of a direction to personal intercourse with a personal God. Are we not sometimes turned from this direct intercourse by theology itself, by an artificial theology, by "schemes of redemption," which misrepresent the work of Christ? How often do our "schemes of redemption" set Him forth rather as a dispensation from the requirements of the law, and as an equivalent for sin, than as a King who is to reign by the righteousness of His subjects! Christ is indeed the end of the law, yet not by being instead of the law to us and of the keeping of the law by us, but by establishing the law in our hearts. Too often Christ is regarded rather as a Saviour from punishment, than as the Saviour from sin, who saves, indeed, from punishment, but only by setting us above its region, that is, by giving us a union with God, whereby we are brought into a region (not indeed above law or its operation, but) where we are freed from the pains of the lower laws, not by their operation anywhere or anyhow being suspended, but by our rising above them into a superior region, in which, as the outward perishes the inward is renewed day by day, we growing beyond the need

of the old law as we rise into the stature of our high calling in Christ. By another "scheme of redemption," that whereby we see Christ "made sin for us" in the sense of having wrought out a merit which is applied to us by the sacraments, the righteousness of Christ, instead of making men righteous, is practically used to dispense men from its necessity. Yet one chief vocation of the ministry is to preach and enjoin righteousness.

The gospel is pre-eminently a declaration of the fact that a righteous Lord liveth and reigneth ; that, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, God is righteous ; that one event does not happen alike to all ; that Winkleid does not sleep the same sleep as Burke and Hare ; that God rewards, that He will reward, that He is rewarding man according to his works. If we preached such things as we ought, we doubt not that the pulpit would regain its power, and the ministry at any rate would not be despised. No doubt we should be spoken against, we should have enemies, many would speak evil of us, we should be called "turners of things upside down," but we should be blameless and at peace. We should be in our right position, and sure of it. At present we are not sure of this ; we know not where we are. We are not indeed spoken against, neither are we spoken for. Better to be spoken against, yea, if need be, sawn asunder, than to live in uselessness, and yet be God's ministers. To disturb no one, is not the way to honour, glory, and immortality ; to be at rest now is not the way to be crowned with glory, honour, and immortality hereafter.

But do we indeed look for such crown? The prophets and apostles (who have since had temples dedicated to them) first suffered ere they entered into glory. They were preachers of righteousness, bold to speak the truth, to rebuke vice, and patiently to suffer for the truth's sake; they were bold to testify against spiritual wickedness in high places. They were not, perhaps, so well skilled as we are in historical criticism, ecclesiology, or ritual. But which will be the longest remembered? To how many of us will churches be dedicated, and after which of us will hills and rocks, seas and friths, be called?

It is said by many that we are on the verge of a great revolution, both religious and social. It may, or may not, be so. In the possibility of it, however, have our prophets prophesied as they ought? Have our watchmen told us of the night, given light to our feet, warned or entreated, pointed out the exciting causes, urged the removal of stumbling-blocks? It is *possible* that such an event *is* before us; if so, it will have premonitory symptoms. It may be that we are in the midst of these symptoms without our having been aware of them; certainly we are little told of them. The foreboding and the producing causes may be present without having been observed. It is possible for the uninitiated to be amid the forebodings of storm, or the predisposing causes of disease, without recognising the one, or being sensible of the other. We may be living in the midst of abuses, which we do not see, but which our children will think incredible. It may be we do not see them,

because we do not know them when we do see them. They may require special observers, men of insight. But ought not our spiritual guides to be such? They are watchmen, overseers: they ought to see and know the roots and signs of things, and to be able to warn us of good or evil ere it comes upon us. Many of the questions now asked spring from deep roots, and their answers do not lie on the surface; their principles are out of the reach of many, who see but their results. Questions regarding the being of God, the human soul, existence, time, eternity, the relation of this world with that to come, are now freely mooted; they have far-off roots deeply affecting all society. Other and social questions, which have before been asked, and especially stirred at times preceding civil changes, are now everywhere discussed. "Liberty, equality, fraternity," are the words we now hear; words which have been heard before, involving questions stirred before, but never yet set at rest. Ere the first French Revolution similar questions occupied men's minds. The Revolution began the answer, but it did not work out a true conclusion; its aberrations, as we all know, culminated in a military nuisance, trodden at last under foot by the armed heel of Europe. The questions which aroused the Revolution were not answered. They are not yet answered. The desire of humanity for liberty, equality, and fraternity, is a true desire; the questions asked concerning them are needful questions: they must sooner or later have a sufficient solution; for, if the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ be true, they are to be the lot of our

common humanity. And if the questions do not get true answers they will get false ; they will be falsely answered by solutions in fire and blood. Assuredly they will be asked, and answered in that way, until the true answer comes. Christianity is their true answer, and the life and death of Christ the way. The ministers of Jesus Christ have much to do in this matter ; they have to point out the true solution.

It may be said that the ministry has nothing to do with temporal things, and that social questions are but temporal things. True, they are so ; but they lead to heavenly things, for the way to heaven is through the earth, and they are our way to life, so that as we do here our end is there, and our end is made or marred by our right or wrong knowledge and handling of the way. Not to apply Christianity to the great questions of daily life is to make no practical use of Christianity ; which, if not practical, is nothing, and has no meaning in this world. If the true life is to be postponed to a *hereafter*, what need of the *now* ? But this life contains the elements of the hereafter. The hereafter is made up of the now. The Christian ministry, no doubt, ought to treat all questions in a high and heavenly manner, but it ought to treat all questions which are practical. If it holds its doctrines apart from common life—apart from use — of what value are they ? If it holds dogma or doctrine in an abstract and purposeless manner, it is no more than the hieroglyphic religion of the Egyptians. Alas, how often is this the case, and Christianity but known, as it were, botanically, or by the celestial globe, not as a living

plant, or an actual sparkling star! Often, while the sign is intimately known, and all the mapping of theology familiar, the thing itself is but little known.

Nay, to such an extent does technical Christianity obscure the true meaning of spiritual things that an advent is often prayed for which has already come. What, for instance, is more common than to hear it said that it will require a great "outpouring of the Spirit" before such and such things—say, the reunion of Christendom—can be expected? The words seem good; but do they not evince an unconsciousness of the meaning of past revelation? Surely if a father calls a son, as God has called us in Christ, and the son were to say, "Ere I can come a great outpouring of the Spirit will be required," would not the father count himself mocked? The outpouring of the Spirit is in the nature and fulness of the call. What more do we demand? What hinders our common worship of a common Father now? Is there anything to hinder, but the absence of a right spirit in ourselves, so that we fail to realise the common call? Who made the distinction of churches? Not He who calls us to Himself as the One Father by His Son—"the Son of Man." In refusing this call to unity, and waiting for something else, do we not come under the accusation of St. Paul, that of "seeking to bring again Christ from above or from the dead?" Looking for that which we have *already* received, do we not put, as it were, Christ out of the world, relegating Him to books or to antiquarian worships?

In temporal affairs there is much which the Christian ministry might turn to spiritual advantage. Transitory questions, doubtless, as being of this earth, to the human spirit they are not transitory ; and anything which concerns the welfare of humanity cannot be alien from the office of the ministry. Christ is the Saviour of the body.

If it be said that in the greater temporal affairs of the nation the ministry is precluded from a voice in their management by being at this moment excluded from the chief Council of the nation, we reply this is not an exclusion likely long to continue. Ere long the Clergy will come to be recognised as one in the same Christianity with the Laity, or if still in any sense regarded as a class apart, the difference will be felt as no barrier to admission.

Of the many great temporal questions relating to the welfare of the country, the question of Establishment of religion we have already considered ; that of education is too large a subject for this place, and would require a separate consideration of its own ; but other questions, such as the tenure of land and the relations of capital to labour, though, strictly speaking, beyond our sphere, and only affecting the Christian ministry as they affect the principles of love and union, nevertheless are thus so interwoven with higher things, that we should err if we gave no attention to them. Our office, as setting us above all personal and prejudiced considerations, ought to enable us to act dispassionately, to advise, and to help adjust such questions with advantage to other men, and thus prevent, by tem-

perate and early consideration, future strife and hasty decisions.

In Ireland the question of land tenure has already come before us, and as it entered largely into the causes of the first Revolution in France, it is advisable that an early consideration should be given to the question in general, especially if there is any risk in our country and times, as some suppose, of similar attempts at a violent and perhaps false adjustment. The Revolution in France, indeed, may be said to have originated in and turned upon matters arising out of this question. The first symptoms of Revolution were seen in the destruction of the houses of the landowners, its last in the adoption of the Code Napoleon, by which all former land tenures were abolished. There were doubtless special grievances connected with the tenure of land in France, which do not exist there now, and which never did, except in a very modified form, exist in this country ; but as the working of some parts of our system is generally the same, and may be attended with similar bad results, it is desirable to examine the question as early and as fundamentally as may be in our power.

To do this we must put ourselves in the position of those who are under the operation of the system, and see it with the eyes of those who are mainly affected by it, that is, the ignorant and humbler classes. Let us take a common case. A poor woman is about to be turned out of her cottage for non-payment of rent. Her child sees its mother cry, and asks the reason. She tells it she cannot pay the

rent. It asks, "What is the rent ; do all pay rent, does the Seigneur in the chateau?" She says, "No, he does not ; they pay to him." The child replies, "His house is very large ; has he not enough already?" She says that "it is from getting so much rent from others, from the poor, that he is rich." This is the "land question" as it appears to them. They do not go, probably they cannot go, very deep⁴ into it ; they can only understand principles by their results : abstract questions are above them. Questions as to right of property, security of property, inequality of property, arising originally from difference of morality and talent, and denoting superiority and civilisation, they cannot entertain ; nor is it needful that they should do so. It is not needful that they should be political economists, and skilled in the "wealth of nations." It is necessary, however, were it only for the safety of the state, that they should feel, and should have reason to feel, that the civilisation is so regulated as to be a help, and not a hindrance, to the nation. This is a necessary and reasonable proposition, the settlement of which underlies the existence of civilisation itself,—a continuous problem in every country, upon the right solution of which depends the security of life itself, as well as of property, and the possibility of any property being real, in the sense of being inheritable.

But land occupies a position different from that of any other property. It is held by the Crown, but only in trust for the Nation. It is granted by it, therefore, only conditionally, and for reasons. Hence the question arises whether

the Crown can at any time so dispose of land as to injure the general or national welfare ; whether it can so alienate the soil as to enable any individual to denude it of inhabitants. The question has been practically answered for some years in the affirmative ; but the answer has never been recognised as satisfactory, or as authentically given, that is, as given by a sufficient authority.

Prima facie it is evident that every one has a birthright to a place and provision in his nation. That right is already recognised in our country by the existence of a Poor Law, which has for its object the securing of this right to all. That this law, however, as at present constituted, is an adequate fulfilment of the principle no one can suppose. It does not secure a place for a man in any sufficient manner, and in this respect does not discharge aright the duties of the Crown to the people : it is but a travesty of England's boast that "every man's house is his castle," for it secures no independent place for any man. In the original feudal system this probably was done by the method of "commons," places in every parish where all had a right to a house, every parishioner to settle and build ; a right only voidable by sentence for the commission of a penal offence. Among the Celtic tribes this was effected by the land being vested in the tribe as a whole, and in the ancient Jewish nation by every man having an inalienable landed inheritance. It is probable that none of these methods would operate beneficially now, or could be adopted absolutely in the changed conditions of our own day ; yet some method

must be adopted of providing for the demand, if landed property, or indeed any property, is to have any true or stable foundation.

The unsuccessful working of the present system cannot but enforce ere long radical changes. By the abuse of the present land tenures the country is crowded with paupers, for whom it is sought to provide, through the Poor Law, a maintenance which on the whole increases the evil; the inhabitants of the country are driven in upon the villages and towns; the young emigrate; the old, the infirm, and the children are left a burden on the nation; labour becomes scarce, and the poor rates increase in ratio with the decrease of returns of profit. The question therefore begins to be asked whether, after all, the present system of tenure *is* the best which can be adopted, or indeed the best for the possessors of land themselves? The matter deserves deep consideration. It is time for those who are in a position to judge dispassionately, to endeavour to understand the question, and to seek some satisfactory solution.

It is scarcely to be expected that those who are in the habit of looking on land as absolutely their own, will be readily disposed to think that any change can be for the better as to its tenure. Yet, when they consider the weight of their present burdens, the pressure even of the existing poor law, the probability of heavier burdens being laid on land by future parliaments, the necessity at present lying on themselves for expenditure on buildings, roads, bridges, &c., a pressure which might, and no doubt would, with right to

landed settlement granted to others, be partly transferred elsewhere, when likewise they reflect that the transfer of labour to other parts by the present system of eviction may not be the best thing for any landed property, even the landholders themselves might well take into consideration the possibility of new and better arrangements.

It is possible that an objection to change the present tenures of land may arise from the alteration it would make on the cherished ties of primogeniture and entail. Yet it is not difficult to see that a great change is taking place in the state of feeling in this country on these subjects. Parents are beginning to be convinced that the worship which accrues to an elder son is injurious to himself. They see also the extreme injustice which is inflicted by the present law on brothers and sisters, who, in nine cases out of ten, receive no assistance from the elder but that which the law obliges. The unnatural relationships, too, which ensue, the composure with which the death is regarded of those otherwise nearest and dearest, the meanness to which the insufficiency of provision for the younger and the supposed impossibility of adding to income by exertion oblige many in the titled and upper classes to have recourse, make those who have bitterly experienced the working of these laws not greatly desirous for their continuance. In fact, they are but artificial arrangements whereby the working of natural order and justice are too often prevented. In the case of a title existing in a family, special regulations might be interposed, perhaps, to preserve

for it a competent support ; but in all other cases it is surely just that the usual providential laws be allowed to take their course.

Doubtless new and better arrangements are required for the peace and prosperity of this country ; for the spirit of the times is such as not to bear anything which carries even a colour of unfairness. Nothing is more dangerous than any appearance of a nation perishing for the sake of a few. That it can come to this we do not fear. There are too many noble souls even among those interested in the maintenance of things as they at present are, men who would gladly sacrifice even themselves for the good of others, to prevent any serious hindrance to the accomplishment of a clear general benefit. Most of such now are wholly unaware of the character of the working of the present laws, or of the nature of the feeling which their working engenders among the poor. The feeling with which the poor regard their homes, for example, is little understood among the rich. Their houses seem so wretched, so identical in appearance, so little seems sacrificed in losing them, that their loss seems to others a trifling evil ; yet it is not felt so by themselves, and the bitterness of feeling created by general evictions is often, or has been, so great as to imperil the nation itself. If it had not been for the loyalty of the Scottish people and their religious unity, the same scenes as have been witnessed in Ireland would have been enacted among ourselves. "Let the French land where they like," said they in one place to an officer recruit-

ing for the Naval Reserve ; " it is all one to us, we are driven into the sea already." " Enlist the black cattle," said they to another, a military officer recruiting in the Highlands ; " there is nothing else left." And how suggestive is the opprobrium under which a landowner labours among his own class, when the accusation is, " He allows people to put upper stories to their houses," lowering thereby the value of land ! Sad speeches in a Christian land, and pregnant of coming change. In many places it is but too true that the poor are poor, the working classes miserable, the majority wretched, in order that one may be aggrandized ; unable, for one man's benefit, to obtain ground to build or dwell on, they are huddled hundreds into rooms where there should be but ten. And are they not patient in their misery ? The Lord knoweth their patience. Meanwhile our prophets are prophesying smooth things ! Lord, how long ?

That a great sum would be required for providing a new standing for the poor is obvious, but it seems to lie at hand. Should a disestablishment of the Church take place, and a difficulty occur as to the disposal of its present revenues, it might be considered whether the truest method of aiding poverty is not by prevention rather than by cure, and whether the revenue, if (from difficulties as to denominations and other reasons) it cannot be given to religious teachers, might not be best employed in elevating the standard of the people through the attainment of a higher social position. It would be a mistake to give the money as a help to

diminish poor-rates, for that would be but to make provision for a perpetual poverty ; it would be better to endeavour to strike at the root of the one cause of poverty in the country, viz., the many having no original basis for independence. If sufficient soil to meet the needs of the inhabitants for a separate place of dwelling, every family for itself, were set apart in every parish, something of a return to the nature of commons in England, or after the manner of the original commune of Switzerland, so that an independent domicile should be possessed, to be erected by themselves and forfeited alone by penal sentence, we cannot doubt that a great step would be taken in the direction of the removal of the present evils arising from a misreading of the nature of the tenure of land, a step advantageous for all parties, and for the best interests of Christianity itself.

The question of the relations of Capital and Labour is one which presses on, after that of the Land, for a more fundamental examination than it has hitherto received. Heretofore their relations have been regulated only by the pressure of forces moved by distress. It must be possible to have their relations based upon sounder principles. It is evident that capital cannot be employed at a loss ; it is equally evident that those employed by it, if they have no knowledge of its working, will not be content with its to them apparently arbitrary results. It is probable that a system of co-operation under a representative management would work better than the present method. The immediate results might not be so profitable to one of the

parties as heretofore, nor the gain so great to the other as they expect; but in the long-run the returns might be greater even to both parties than now. At first there might be failures, as there have been in banking and railway management, when carried on in similar ways; but these are only initiatory experiences, unavoidable in the introduction of new systems, and generally decreasing with use. Once generally introduced, co-operation would probably settle down to such mutual relations as are recognised in the mechanical forces, of which when we know the relative meaning and power, and put them into their right connection, there is an absolute certainty of success.

But for the Christian ministry it is less open perhaps to consider the scientific relations of these things than their moral bearings. The union of labour and capital must, no doubt, have an intellectual basis, but it must also have a moral basis.

We urge then that the mutual understanding and harmony which would ensue from such arrangements as we are advocating, would cut at the root of those jealousies and collisions which threaten to render, under the present system, the union of labour and capital unstable, and to put an end to the mercantile and manufacturing superiority of the country. And, let us remark, in favour of co-operation in this country, that, whilst in foreign lands it is a rare sight to see two men together in business, in Great Britain such partnership is the rule. Mutual confidence, belief in

the integrity of one another, has hitherto in this country been great among business partners. Let us hope that this trust will not only continue, but be so far extended, that partnerships will take place, consisting not only of two or three but of a hundred or a thousand partners, working with their own hands and choosing their own officers, and that co-operation on this enlarged scale may tend to solve some of the social problems which now disturb and hurt us. The tendency of the age towards union promises something in this direction ; the prophecies of the future look all this way ; and in some such way, perhaps, a practical brotherhood may be achieved for mankind, and the elevation of man as a whole ; an elevation not caused by acts of charity, not by giving of alms, but by the general "levelling up" of the whole mass through a better recognition of the interdependence of the whole.

Unquestionably the greatest hindrance to the harmonious working of capital and labour arises from moral causes. The common desire of capitalists, when sufficient results have been obtained, to retire and assume the habits of another class does much to disturb relations which can only be really and permanently satisfactory if they are supposed to be continuous. Of course no blame can be attached to this practice, and there is no great probability of seeing an end of it at an early date ; but it would be well to consider the evils which such change entails. It is a practice, no doubt, which approaches to the working of a natural law, and, so far as it helps to obliterate the land-

marks of castes and classes is positively beneficial. But the custom may be, and at present is, carried too far; for too great readiness to sever old business relations has a tendency to shake that mutual confidence, without which there is no real security. Moreover the practice, in the first break-off from old habits, is personally detrimental to those retiring. It is long ere the habits of a new life are acquired, much vexation is felt from want of sympathy, great awkwardness and discomfort in a new sphere. An eagerness to escape to the higher sphere also creates ill-will in those who are left behind, especially if there seems a desire to forget the past. When sons are sent into the army, to fashionable public schools, to great universities, with the idea of getting rid of old habits and connections, pain is felt by those who are forsaken, and little pleasure by those who go. Those forsaken think, and not without reason, that it would have been a higher ambition to keep up old connections, and to attain the conditions and qualities of an easier life without parting with old things. The best points of an old aristocracy, its reticence, self-command, suavity, respect of one another in domestic life, its magnanimity, and such like qualities, are the result of feelings which are mainly the product of an ascertained and sure position.

Were principle on this head carried into daily life, and the dignity of all honest and true work felt and established, could anything more noble be conceived than a genuine business life? What need of any better basis for serenity

and magnanimity? The greatness of the old noble rested on the number and fidelity of his adherents. Is no such greatness possible for the captain of industry? Has he not his hundreds, or it may be his thousands, of warriors? Has he no battle-field, no victory, no gain but that of money? Is it not for him to say, "I have fought a good fight; through American wars, depressions of trade, and losses to myself, no mouth dependent on me has gone to bed unfilled; of those entrusted to me I have lost none?" Is there no greatness, no field of battle and of victory here? Thanks be to God, already there is much of this nobility among men of business. Already many battle-fields of industry are fought with other than mere weapons of profit and loss; men are supplied with religious help, medical aid, instruction, and amusement, by their mercantile and manufacturing chiefs, far above their rates of wages and money payments. How much greater are such chiefs in their nobility than he who produces nothing, contributes nothing, but feeds upon honey stored up by others, even if they were his own ancestors, living under the shadow of a name! When workmen see such men not anxious to leave them but to remain with them, they think more of their work and of themselves; and labour and capital are thus both doubly secure. Thank God there are now such capitalists, yea, an increasing number, not eager to get rid of their burden, to "bear aristocratic arms," to "put liveries on their footmen," or titles to their names, but who seek a higher honour and glory; quiet men, too, who delight in

intelligent intercourse, whose homes are the scenes of peace and improvement. Such homes elevate both the employer and the employed. Workmen seeing them take courage, and look on such with eyes not of jealousy but of hope; for they know that they themselves have but to overcome a difference not of degree but of kind, and that with time and the patience of hope all that is as yet awaiting on their part can be attained.

Labour, on its part, should be advised to consider the return due to the capital which employs it, such capital representing the thought and concentrated energy of consecutive years, and therefore deserving to have its returns in proportion. But if Labour and Capital take the form of co-operation, and the transactions in which both parties are engaged are mutually known, it is probable that such knowledge would go far to remove that distrust which at present exists, and too often threatens to imperil the continuance of their connection. No doubt ere long a higher general economical education will contribute to the solution of such questions. And the growth of political knowledge will hasten this end, by showing that what is truly good and for the benefit of one class must equally be good for that of all other classes.

It may not, however, seem a branch of the Christian ministry to devote its attention to political objects; and here therefore we would urge on the ministry nothing more than attention to their moral aspects. But as to these aspects the ministry should take care to inculcate and insist

on purity—purity of principle—both that pains should be taken to know that which is the right, and that all action should be apart from interested or unworthy motives. It should insist that feelings and principles which are indispensable to the Christian private life cannot be set aside when great and momentous public questions are at stake, whereon not only individual but national welfare depend. Signs are not wanting, notwithstanding some appearances to the contrary, that in the body of the nation an advance in the apprehension of right principle is already steadily going on. It is beginning to be generally understood that the seizure of food and place are not the chief ends of man, that principle is the right end. This is new ; yet it is so real and great as to put those politicians who do not recognise it in danger. The heart of the nation beats more truly than heretofore. Old cries, such as, “ Divide and govern,” “ Provide religion on demand,” are out of date. If Establishments are in danger because they do not possess a sufficiency of truth, to establish anything which is mainly untrue is out of the question. The nation has got beyond the perpetration of wholesale unrighteousness. It may not at once pull down that which is defective, but it will not put up that which it believes to be wrong. The nation as a whole is ahead of any one man or institution in it. It counts immoral that which would satisfy many a statesman. Blessed are they who know and feel all this, and who feel likewise that, if need be, they are ready to sacrifice themselves for principle. Surely the Christian ministry should

be foremost among the champions of right principle in public matters.

It is the non-application of its dogma to practical ends which has done much to weaken the influence of the ministry. Christ Himself has been made too often but an abstraction. He has been too much forgotten as the Revealer of the *righteousness* of God—that righteousness which is the Gospel. The Gospel, no doubt, is, that although clouds and darkness surround God's throne, yet righteousness and judgment are its habitation. We must first therefore be preachers of Righteousness, and all other things will be added. To which end we must ourselves be righteous, rectified by God's righteousness. We must be sincere, above suspicion as to our faith and practice, known as ourselves believing that which we teach, orthodox in the true sense.

To be accepted in our prophetic office, above all things it is necessary that there should be no suspicion of our having any but a moral object. Being supposed to seek but the exaltation of a system is fatal to acceptance and usefulness. The most gifted and self-sacrificing of the Roman priesthood are now ineffectual with the multitude, from the impression that they have an *arrière pensée* of an exaltation merely of their Church; and, apart from the history of the Roman Church, it is a true instinct which teaches men to shun the servants of a system. Direct action of heart to heart, the ministering of the good Samaritan, that is, an uncovenanted and unprofessional connection, is ever felt to be that which

is the most true, and therefore is the most trusted. No doubt "the Church" may be called "a system;" doubtless our Lord commissioned twelve Apostles. But there was no magic in the number, no virtue in the limit. He must have arranged somehow to convey His words. The outward constitution of the Church was not essential to His message. There are facts which indicate no principle. We must not, therefore, build up a system out of this, or suppose that His words or their consequent seals are not genuine save in certain mouths and hands. We must beware of appearing to be the agents of a system. We are not sent to preach a system, neither that of Episcopacy nor that of Presbytery; we are sent to preach Jesus Christ and Him only. This is no vain distinction. Let us be true, let us not be suspected of being false, to the Church to which we belong, let us avoid all words or acts which convey such suspicion; for they are fatal to respect and usefulness, and indicate an imperfect or an untrue mind. But let us not be thought to suppose that spiritual virtue is communicated by material apparatus, or that a ministry of an uncommon kind is needed. Let us rise to higher things; let us live in that region which makes the face to shine and the breast to swell, where the heart says, I have seen the Lord, where we behold His glory, and the Word become flesh is in the midst of us.

Let no one undertake the cure of souls until he has gone far in the cure of his own. Yet let us not, by undue self-introspection, draw back from the ministry if we have taken

it. Its ultimate victory is certain. Christ died, and rose, and ascended, not for defeat, but for victory. He must increase; and our increase is His. Happy is he who can forward this: it is the joy of the Lord. Let us then do our part. Let us show forth Christ, and by this regenerate the world. It is indeed a great and noble work to help with tenderness to heal the wounds of humanity, of a sad and stricken world. Nor is it difficult; not when we consider it. Men are all near and dear to us, nearer and dearer than we believe when in our health; on a bed of death, when we seem to be saying good-bye to them for ever, we discover how dear they and all around us are. And who of us can look on humanity, on any brother asleep, a toil-worn son of man, without love and sorrow? When the world is asleep under the silent stars, and foolish guns are laid aside, and poor spades put away, and the crown falls from the pillow, and the toy lies by its side, and the woman and child in one embrace sleep the sleep of ages and return as it were to whence they came; and we who are awake move through the house afraid to disturb, silent and doubly alone, our eyes filled with tears, our ears with the sounds of our youth,—can we then decline our vocation, that of ministering to the wants of stricken humanity, and of helping mankind to a higher, a better, and a more abundant life? Be it ours then to speak to them of Christ, to give them unto God, to lift them up to God, and to cry for them, “Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down,” and take them to Thyself; offering

them up again to God from whence they came, offering them and ourselves also to Him now while we live, ere we fall back into the dry and dishonoured dust of a broken tabernacle ; praying unto Him and saying, " Domine, opera manuum tuarum ne despicias !" " Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis !"

But no doubt the changes which are now at work in the constitution of the Roman Church will greatly affect the future aspects of the Christian ministry at large. The declaration of the personal infallibility of the Pope by a General Council, or, if not by a General Council, by one esteemed general by the Church of Rome herself, cannot but put the Christian ministry throughout a great part of Christendom into new relations.

Believing, as they do, Christianity to be dependent upon and tested by a continuous ministry ever in one visible fellowship, those Roman Catholics who do not concur in the declaration of papal infallibility must find themselves in a position of some difficulty. That the declaration of papal infallibility is the only logical and sufficient issue to the demand for a visible and continuous ministry which must have some recognised mouthpiece and test, we do not doubt. What then will remain for those who demand continuous visible ministry ever in one fellowship, and who yet set aside papal infallibility as its criterion and proof? Without some central headship such unity as they desire cannot be produced, nor will they have such an organ as they deem requisite for the recognition and enunciation of

truth itself. If they should fall back upon the communion and fellowship of such Christian bishops as are not in communion with Rome, and who take for their guide the declarations of their majorities, will this eventually satisfy them? Have we had the working of this principle successfully exhibited in the decisions of General Councils, many of which are opposed the one to the other, and some also opposed to that which almost all among us now called orthodox believe to be essential to the truth? Yet it is a principle largely held among ourselves; to a certain extent it underlies the platform on which the Church of England is built, and every now and then it exhibits its existence in a manner which proves how wide are its foundations; witness, for example, the distinguished reception lately afforded to the Archbishop of Syra solely on the ground of his possessing certain external criteria, also the protest just made by many eminent members of Convocation and the Church against the administration of the Holy Communion to other members of the Christian ministry than those possessed of these external marks, though about to co-operate in a revival of Holy Scripture. The attempt may even yet be made, by disputing the œcumenical character of the Vatican Council, to rest upon this principle within the Roman Church itself; for it is evident, from the writings of the German and French ecclesiastics who have taken objections to the proceedings of the Roman Council, that, if they have shown a dissatisfaction with the actions of the Court of Rome, and with much in her past history, yet they

do not find fault with the principles on which the Church of Rome is built, and do not at present contemplate any other reform, or desire any other definition of Christianity, than that which can be produced by the removal of certain special aspects of Rome. It may be, therefore, that no great immediate secession from the headship of the Pope will take place, though any overt act, such as putting the principles of the syllabus into operation, backed by the declaration of infallibility, may produce a rupture and secession at any moment.

Still, whether there be secession or not, an impetus has been given to inquiry, especially among continental Roman Catholics, which must, we believe, sooner or later end in the rejection, not only of Papal Infallibility, but also of the principle of Episcopal Councils, as the means for the recognition and enunciation of truth, and consequently for the preservation of the unity of the Church. That these cannot be relied upon is evident, as we have said, both from the nature of things, and from the past history of Christianity; and this is still more apparent if we look at that which is the nature of Christianity itself, as seen by its own light, the light, that is, which is shown in the record of the New Testament. If we regard the nature of Christianity as there revealed, it is obvious that no external or mechanical agency can either produce or test that which Christianity is in itself, and that Christianity, as seen in its great Founder's history, in the life and death of Jesus Christ our Lord, is its own test. Christianity is the pre-

sence, and revelation the conveyance, of a higher than the human spirit, and nothing less than this can give or be that which it is itself; nothing which is not of the nature of spirit, and of the same spirit, can either be its conveyance or proof; nothing of a mechanical and material nature can be of its nature. Christianity cannot be dependent for its truth or existence upon the dictum of a Pope, or the concurrence of a council, or the imprimatur of a ministry, but is divine by its own nature, the witness to its divinity being from that which it is in itself, and not from external authority, which can neither add to nor take from its intrinsic value, and is indeed wholly apart from it. That God should make a man infallible is perfectly credible, more so than that He should make five hundred men infallible; but it is self evident to those acquainted with the doctrines of the New Testament that they are what they are, equally divine and authentic, whether such men are infallible or not. What guide have we to the recognition and enunciation of Christianity? Its guide and interpretation ever are its own principles, which are fully present in the scriptural records contemporary with its birth. To these principles we must look for our guide, and by those secure our final triumph. It may be long in coming—it is sad to think how long it has been already—and the prevalence of such theories as we have been examining is surely a startling and melancholy proof how far we are from the promised triumph; but no doubt it will come, for the principles are eternal and divine.

Nothing has tended more to defer this triumph than the conceptions to which we have referred. Confusion of the material with the spiritual aspects of Christianity, making the truth of the latter depend upon the integrity of the former, has, we believe, while we fully grant that some definite material agency is required, done more than any other thing to hinder the progress of Christianity. This was the first decadence of the Church, and with this first false step a thousand subsequent were inevitable. From such a decadence resurrection is very difficult; for, as a true conception of Christianity will assuredly give us a true one of the ministry, a false conception of the ministry will always give a false one of Christianity; and when a false view of the ministry (as in the Middle Ages) is all that we have, how are we to get a true view of Christianity? No mechanical notion can give us a true view either of the ministry or of revelation. As in matter, so it is in spirit; there are two actions or unions, two agencies quite apart, the chemical and the mechanical, the one real and complete, the other apparent and limited. A mechanical cause has no abiding place in Christianity. Such agency is but apparent and temporary; it may operate for a time, but it forms no permanent or uniform substance; it produces no real unity or vitality. If there is motion, it is but the result of some primary impulse received elsewhere, as of an engine which has left the line. Thus it has been with the Church of Rome for many generations; thus it still is in some other churches: such may have apparent and

spasmodic energy, they may possess a certain kind of spiritual life, but the action is not original and genuine; it is but a reflex power, a sentimental feeling, not the very truth, not life in itself from above.

Any other criterion of the Christian ministry than that which bases its sufficiency on that which it conveys, involves the interpreting of God's providential government not by principles but by circumstances, which may be local and perhaps exceptional, and is therefore no guide at all. The essence of Christianity must be found in that which is essentially true, and is everywhere and always the same; and the rule and test of the Christian ministry must be found in the same connection. The test and characteristic of Christianity is that it is light, even as He whom it reveals is Light; and the same must be the test and characteristic of the ministry. All things, no doubt, are providential; but all things providential are not a rule. The constitution of the Christian ministry throughout has been providential, but it has never been always in one way; no rule therefore can be drawn. In the first century it was one thing, in the fifth another, in the tenth another; all, indeed, were providential, but all were not one, and therefore no one rule can be drawn. In fact, the difference of way or form shows that no rule should be drawn. And at the most the ministry is relative and ancillary; that which it ministers is the one thing needful both for the world and for itself; but as the circumstances in which that will have to be administered vary, so the mode of administration

must vary also. There may be better, there may be worse ; but in no case is the mode to rule the thing, but the thing the mode. That which ministers depends on that which is ministered, and not the reverse. Of course, if the test of the sufficiency of the ministry and its power rest in a likeness unto Christ, then there will be a higher and lower ministry, a superior and "inferior" clergy, according as there is greater or less resemblance to the Lord ; but likeness will be the criterion of sufficiency in all.

So far is this view from lowering the dignity and efficiency of the ministry, that we believe it is this aspect alone which has ever given it victory, as, no doubt, it caused its first and overwhelming victory. A lower platform than this puts the clergyman but on the platform of the policeman or schoolmaster. The true power of the ministry, its only real self-contained and eternal power, is in its likeness unto Christ. It was this alone which overcame the world. It is this only which, in any true sense, still overcomes it. It is this alone which gives evidence of a world unseen. This only hath immortality ; but to this, immortality seems the natural accompaniment. When the world sees men leading lives over which (the fear of) death has no power, the world itself is prone to honour, not only the God of such, but the men themselves. Power of all sorts comes to such, and in proportion to their likeness unto Christ. In the beginning a full measure made a bishop or ruler of the church ; all true bishops are saints of God, and all the saints were bishops. For who are the true bishops of the Churches ?

Are they not the men who to this day give their names to promontories and islands and cathedral towns, in whose renown all mere professional and official bishops are speedily lost and forgotten? Thus the monastic superseded the secular priesthood because of its higher sanctity, until it, too, forgetting the cause of its rise, fell from its elevation. In all cases it was likeness unto Christ, and not professional distinctions, which gave the real and original power. "What," says St. Paul, "is there no wise man among you?" He looked to wisdom, not to office, for the controlling power; had such office, as is often supposed, then existed, no doubt he would have appealed to that. Elisha succeeded to the office of Elijah because his eyes were opened, and he could see the manner of his departure; it was this, and not the mantle of Elijah, which gave him power. Apollos, Barnabas, Mark, St. Peter, and St. Paul, were different because of the difference in themselves, and not because of office. The putting of St. Peter first because of his name, without recognising that he had his name because of that which he himself was and knew, has been the main cause of all the subsequent mischief, not to the Church of Rome only, but to all churches which do not recognise that office is only true in connection with the truth it gives. St. Peter, in recognising Christ as the manifestation of God, had the keys of heaven. All who recognise this have these keys. They who do not recognise it may claim to represent St. Peter, but they have not his keys. Alas, how long has St. Peter, without his keys, sat

at the door of churches ! St. Peter gave way to St. Paul at Antioch because he there recognised a higher light than his own ; he claimed no official superiority ; he recognised that the keys had passed over to Paul. Wherever the keys are, there no doubt is the primacy ; for the keys are the test of Peter, and not Peter of the keys. And the great key, "that openeth, and no man shutteth, that shutteth, and no man openeth," is Jesus, standing at the right hand of God, the sight of whom makes earth all heaven, whom not to see makes earth but the gate of hell.

Surely in the light of Christ it is but trifling to discuss the primacy or succession. If we have learned Christ Jesus we can have no primacy but His own, and no succession between Him and us. How He is to be made known to the world is doubtless an important question. But more important still is the great preliminary question, What He Himself is who is to be made known ; for nothing in the way of making Him known can be properly done until this question shall have received its true answer. Is it too much then to ask of those who now, in so many lands, are disturbing themselves with questions of primacy, infallibility, succession, whether they as yet really know Him, whether they have first sought and found Him, whom they profess to reveal ?

One cannot but have a certain sympathy with the convulsive struggles of the papacy, deeming itself so surely as it does indispensable to Christ ; nor can sympathy be altogether withheld from those who, in our own land, are

engaged with questions of ministerial genealogy ; yet it is evident that all such struggles and questions would cease, and all anxiety be removed, were an adequate conception of Christ Himself attained. Nothing can be more pathetic, we think, than to read the writings of excellent and amiable men, Roman Catholic and other missionaries and clergy, who miss the point of what they see by not having had a previous sufficiently large apprehension of revelation, or a worthy conception of the character of God as made manifest in Christ Jesus. For instance, in the journals of the Jesuit missionaries, MM. Huc and Gabet, nothing is more wonderful than the simplicity with which they regard as necessary for religion and revelation that which at the most can be but advantageous or even excusable, while they are at a loss to understand the meaning of that which, as far as it goes, is identical with the Christianity which they went to teach. They cannot understand what certain aspects of Buddhism mean, or why they should seem like imitations of revelation ; whilst, on the other hand, they deem indispensable a special apparatus for worship, and are astonished that "a long pair of tweezers," which they considered necessary for the making up of the sacrament, should be viewed with suspicion by the Tartars, who were under the impression that it was an instrument of torture. Again, in the very interesting work of Messrs. Northcote and Brownlow on the Roman catacombs, it is evident that an entirely false interpretation of the early Christian symbols is frequently conceived from want of sufficient previous instruction, or

from lack of that prepared spiritual eye which would have read aright that which it saw. A representation of instrumentality, when severed from the meaning of the life of which it was the exponent, and to which it owed its being and use, is sure to be misleading; any interpretation of a life by symbols, read by light derived only from themselves, cannot but be inadequate, and must tend to confusion. The early Christian symbols were in unison with the life which the primitive Christians led, as that life was in unison with that of their Lord; they offered themselves with Him in a common offering; but such symbols are wholly unintelligible when that life is either unknown or misconceived, which cannot but be the case when interpreted from the point of view of a lower and inferior life. Thus meanings are given to things as apart from the real as they themselves are from that life which this false interpretation holds them to represent; for example, the present dresses of the Roman clergy, which, as seen with the eyes of Messrs. Northcote and Brownlow, are held to confirm the original institution of a separate caste or priesthood, when seen by eyes sufficiently instructed to recognise in them the original dress of the early Roman citizen are found to be positively destructive of such a conception. Yet such transpositions of the character of revelation as this it is easy to understand; they are plain and short. But the way whereby Christianity can have degenerated until it is deemed essential for it to have "a long pair of tweezers," is difficult to follow, and the steps must have been many.

It is clear, however, at first sight, that the school wherein Christ was so "learnt," if it be any school of Christ at all, must indeed be defective; such a school, one must fear, instead of bringing men nearer to God, must remove them further from Him. A ministry which debases the revelation of God is worse than useless.

Inadequate views of God are at the root of all the shortcomings of the ministry. In the beginning of Christianity God was adequately set forth before men in the memory of Christ. Any other or less view than this is inadequate or improper. If this were clearly kept in mind as the primary thing, everything else would speedily fall into its place. Arrangements of detail, of course, there must be, which will vary with circumstances, and may become complicated; St. Peter may become the apostle of the circumcision, and St. Paul of the uncircumcision; but with the key—the image of Christ—possessed and understood, all matters of detail will be kept in their due relations and have their true relative importance. It will not, for instance, be considered fundamental that St. Peter should have been at Rome. He may or may not have been there; though, especially if any sort of primacy were connected with his person, the silence of St. Paul on the subject in his Epistle to the Romans, is certainly remarkable. The notion of his having been bishop of Rome doubtless arose from the blessing connected with his name being supposed to be connected with him personally, and not with the truth of which he was the exponent. This materializing tendency pervades

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all history ; indeed, to reverse the order of spiritual things seems to be the rule and not the exception. There have been times when the great name of God, engraved on a seal, has been held to be *per se* of such power as to effect marvellous results. No doubt the original meaning and order were simply this, that the true knowledge of God is so mighty and powerful as to give a virtual possession of all things. Such also were the meaning and order of the declaration made to St. Peter on the occasion of his vision and confession of God revealed in Christ. But, not realizing the meaning, men have transformed the declaration into a magical talisman, and Peter himself into a corporeal janitor. As spiritual Christianity dies out, it becomes concentrated, it is supposed, and at last is but known by crystallized rites and formal offices, and thus it takes its place among the kingdoms of this world, a material kingdom, with material place. Its offices are then sought because of dignity and position ; men are not sought for office, but seek office for themselves ; Christians become severed into what are called a Clergy and a Laity ; the prayer of the Lord is no longer fulfilled, "that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us;" the gates of Heaven close ; and the Church becomes but an aspect of the world. A secondary Christianity is set up, which at times has prevailed until nothing is left but Church officials, held together by the cement of office, and deriving such action as they have from the original impulse of an engine which has ceased to act, or from such occasional pressure as

the strength of solitary saints imparts—Gregory, Leo, Latimer, Leighton, and such like. This professional aspect of Christianity has in truth at times become the very Antichrist; for no doubt the true Antichrist is within the Church. It is with the Church as with the nations; as the official overshadows the real, and the governmental the individual, national life and church life equally perish. Cæsarism, Papalism, Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism,—all are shadows which have produced this effect. These things are not of the essence either of churches or of nations. If we are lost among the “denominations,” these things are no guide. A true ministry makes a true Church; and a true ministry is likeness unto Christ. Looking on that image with discriminating reverence, we cannot call it Roman, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, still less monastic, papal, metropolitan. Is not the Church that which remains when these things drop off? In a true ministry we find a true Church. What defines the ministry defines the Church, in which (alas, how often do we read it in vain!) there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, circumcision nor uncircumcision. Yet it is not by the subtraction of these things that the Church is made or found. With or without these things it is the body of Christ, in which fair form these are but specks and fissures and lines of marking across its open surface. The Father’s house is co-extensive with His creation, and is built upon Himself; its length and breadth are co-equal with the world, and of it we can only say, in the way of degree and definition, as Tertullian says, “Unam omnium rempublicam agnoscimus mundum.” (Apol. c. 38.)

These differentia, however, are the things which have been the origin of all religious wars and mischiefs. These are the things which, entering into the Church, defile her, and give her the aspects of the world. And, alas, too often it is the simple connection of money with religion which causes the unnatural stratifications of Christianity, dividing it and its ministry into classes and castes. In Rome, in England, in Prussia, in Scotland, this is equally evident. In other times and countries than his own Dante might have sighed—

"Ahi, Constantin, di quanto mal fu matre
Non la tua conversion, ma quella dote
Che da te prese il primo ricco patre!"

And, again—

"O Simon Mago, o miseri seguaci,
Che le cose di Dio, che di bontate
Denno essere spose, voi rapaci
Per oro e per argento adulate,
Or, convenien che per voi suoni la tromba."

DANTE, *Inferno*, xix.

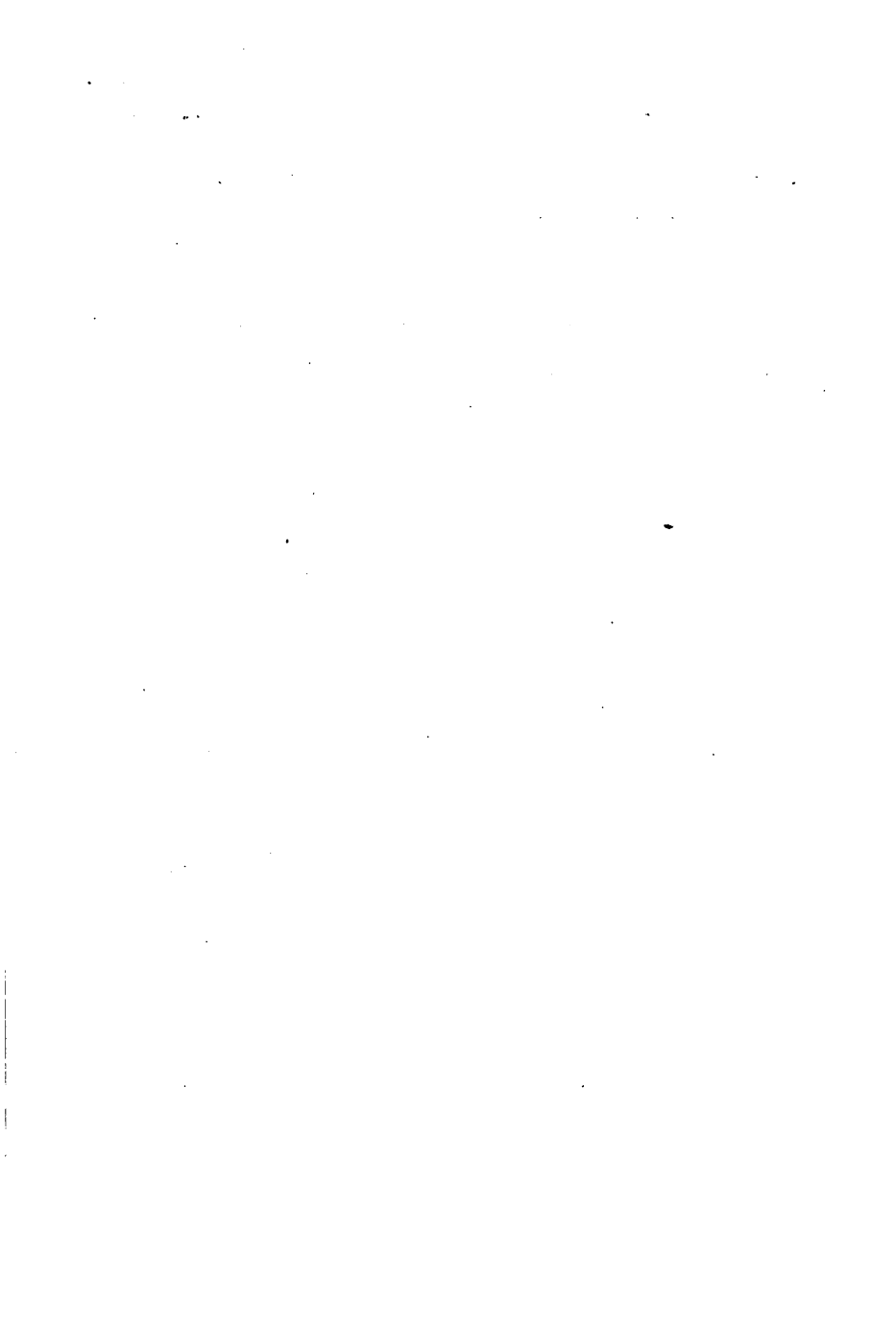
But let us not part from the Christian ministry with words of lamentation. Mistaken, neglected, perverted as it may have been, the Christian ministry is still the highest thing upon earth; that in which we draw nearest to the Most High. It is that in which if we are truly engaged we can never be but as we should wish to be at any time of shaking or surprise. It is that in which every pious mother wishes her son to be engaged. It is its own reward, so sufficiently as to leave no desire for any other. It gives us in its discharge our most intimate convictions of our own immortality. He who is thus "anointed to preach glad tidings to

the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," doubtless the Spirit of the Lord is upon him, —that Spirit which was incarnate in Christ, and which gives the "form of God." Christ is that form, the form by which we see God, by which we know what God is, what He must be ; for unless He be such as is seen in Christ, then it is difficult, and will be increasingly difficult, for us to make head against blank atheism. But, blessed be God, His character is seen by its own light, and proved by its own might, in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. What this true character of the Father is, it is the work of the Christian ministry, drawing its origin and power from Christ, to set forth ; assuredly a divine work, the very nature of which forbids any doubt of its ultimate complete success.

"The initiatory love of God in Christ" (well says F. Seebohm) "has kindled in mankind a love so tender in return that the very mention of His name will sometimes bring a tear into the eye of the strong and brave, a love not confined to the first disciples or to one or two of His personal companions, but felt so widely that there have been thousands in every age who would have been ready to die for Him ; a love both in depth and extent unique in the history of mankind." This love is on the increase, and will increase, as the horizon widens, and the true magnitude of the Christ is more and more revealed. Already this is taking place, and man's apprehension of Christ is growing with the increase of his knowledge. The

work of Christ is now less than of yore considered as some special arrangement by which God can exceptionally deal with man, and more as a revelation of His eternal nature acting according to its laws as there is need, of which if there be any special features these are to be ruled by that which He necessarily is, and not He by them. As the worlds grow upon man's gaze, he treads with more extended view in the steps of Christ, who, with each increase of knowledge, is still found everywhere and always to represent God, ever solving the problems and meeting the needs of humanity, Himself the pledge and prophecy, and likewise the fulfilment, of the love of the universal Father. Christ, the heir of all the worlds and ages, increases with the rise of every sun, the discovery of every star, the birth of every soul. The ministry must and will increase with the increase of Christ. As He cannot, so neither can it, decrease. The bringing of every new thing, the subjecting of every old thing, to the obedience of Christ, is its work and His increase; a work eternal, as He is inexhaustible.

At each fresh discovery, then, whether in the region of mind or of matter, let all who know the Lord lift up their hearts in harmony with the hallelujahs of heaven; and likewise with the patience of hope let them contemplate the sealed book of the future, since "He that openeth" is the Lamb of God.



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*PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS
IN THEOLOGY*



THE ETERNAL LIFE MANIFESTED

By
Rev. John Young, D.D.

THE ETERNAL LIFE MANIFESTED.



IFE is a word of unfathomable meaning. No human intellect has sounded its depth, and exposed and explained the dark secret which it covers. We know and see that it is ; but what it is, in the ultimate analysis, who shall pronounce? The world is full of life. Earth, and air, and seas teem and swarm with manifold, wondrous life. The created universe, as a whole—this sun, the earth, the planets with their satellites, the myriad stars, and suns, and systems which people immensity—even this inorganic universe seems to us almost as a thing of life. It palpitates, glows, coruscates, flies, whirls through space, with such inconceivable velocity, and ever with such perfect precision and constancy, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to detach it from the conception of vitality somewhere. The immense, immanent energy, the irresistible outgoings of living force, the perpetual freshness and youth of inorganic nature, and the skilled and perfect adaptations she exhibits and perpetuates, all cry out against the idea of a mere inert, unconscious,

impassive thing ; unless, indeed, there be conceived behind and within, a Being who is Life, and of whose will and power, nature is the manifestation and the outcome.

I.

But vital as the inorganic universe may seem, there is an immeasurable distance between it and even the lowest forms of vital organization. They are endowed with a kind of selfhood, which finds no corresponding property in mere matter. Even the plant is a true self and is endowed with self-power, the power of self-sustenance, self-growth, and self-propagation. It seeks out, and finds, and supplies itself with the materials which it requires for the purposes of its existence. But the solid, the liquid, the gas, unless acted upon, can originate no change in themselves, and would remain unchanged for ever.

Vegetation, vitality is a mysterious, inscrutable power, *sui generis*, and stands quite apart from, and essentially above, all chemical, mechanical, and cosmical laws. Men of science are able to explain the entire course of vegetation, from first to last ; how the seed and the soil are adapted, the one to the nature of the other, and how the seed takes up into itself the nutriment which the soil supplies. They can show how heat, and light, and moisture, and the properties of the earth and of the seed act and react respectively, and they can detail in full all the processes, on the one hand, of absorption and nutrition, and conversion and assimilation ; and on the other hand, of evolution, and dis-

solution, and decay. But they cannot shed the faintest light on what is more important than the process—its commencement, its origin. It begins invariably with life; this is the plain fact, which a child can perceive, but which no human intelligence can explain. The seed sown must first of all be living if it is to grow. A seed in which the vegetable life has perished is sown in vain. No produce can come forth from it, though it shall consist, all the while, of precisely the same materials, and in exactly the same proportions, as the living seed: the element of life is wanting, and that is fatal. The naturalist can combine all the ingredients which make up the living seed, and in their due proportions; he could, if he chose, form them into the very size and shape of a seed, but he plants it in vain, because, and only because, he cannot impart life to it. Nothing but living matter can communicate life. Life can be communicated; it is constantly being communicated in ten thousand forms, but it cannot be first of all originated by human power or skill.

The latest result of research in this region brings before us a composite substance, protoplasm, which is the condition and the basis of all material life, vegetable and animal; without which material life is never found, and in which it consists. It is a real and pregnant discovery, but we must not glorify it by unfounded exaggeration, and we mistake egregiously if we imagine that it opens to us, in the smallest possible degree, the mystery of life. We have gained a new and weighty link in the chain of physiological facts, but

vitalisation, the principle of life, remains as profound a secret as ever. The naturalist knows with perfect accuracy the constituents of protoplasm, and their exact proportions, and he can form them into the compound which exists in plants and animals, but can he make them live? That is the question. Can he strictly *originate* life in them? He cannot. In spite of all his knowledge and his skill, the carbonic acid, the water, and the ammonia, accurate in amount and in their relative proportions, shall remain utterly forceless and dead—unless, and until they touch pre-existing life. The elements of which protoplasm is composed must first of all come into contact with life, before they can live; they must have life communicated to them, they must be taken up into a living organism, and be assimilated and vitalised. Life is communicated, but it is never originated *ab initio*, by however laborious and skilful combinations or manipulations. “Carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, and hydrogen are each and all lifeless, their compounds, also, on which plants feed, carbonic acid, water, and ammonia, are lifeless. But when they are brought together under certain conditions, they give rise to the still more complex body, protoplasm, and this protoplasm exhibits the phenomena of life.” Yes, this result occurs, *under certain conditions*, and the one invariable, essential condition is, that they shall come into immediate contact with pre-existent life, and shall through this contact become themselves vitalised and vital.

Life stands thus, apart by itself, belongs to a category of its own, and has a kingdom of its own, in harmony with, but

perfectly distinct from, all so-called inorganic powers and changes. Hydrogen and oxygen, in certain proportions and under certain conditions, form water ; in other proportions and under other conditions they burst into flame. These are facts of observation, and that is all we know or can discover ; of the why or the how we know nothing. The two gases become water, and there it ends. They burst into flame, and there it ends ; we know nothing more. But the meanest plant has a force within itself, which, we see and know, it puts forth,—an abiding force, which it continues to put forth, and by which it grows and thrives, unless and until the life be killed. It feeds itself, nourishes, extends, propagates itself by a force from within. The facts are plain, but the mystery is profound. We give it a name, and think we have explained it, but the name explains nothing. We call it life, vitality ; but if the word conveys a sort of knowledge, it also hides much ignorance. It enables us to distinguish this from other subjects of knowledge, but it throws scarcely any light on the essential nature of the thing itself. How and why do the fields that have lain brown and bare for months send up in spring a beautiful covering of green ? How and why are they seen in autumn, laden and waving with plenty ? What is the real cause ? The vegetative force, we reply—the life in the seed. And what is that ? We cannot answer, except by passing into another and a more mysterious region of thought. But reason and enlightened faith point us to that region, and guide us to the overawing conviction, that force, power,

anywhere, at any moment, can ultimately originate, not in an unconscious thing, but only in a Being endowed with intelligence, and with will. That invisible principle of vitality in the plant is manifestly not human, it is strictly divine. It is God in nature, not *natura naturans*, but *natura naturata*. We can understand nothing else. The meanest plant is a profound mystery, at the root of which there is the very power of God. It is God working directly and inscrutably, though always in harmony with physical laws, and with an order which He Himself has ordained and established.

This is not all. Animals, even in their lowest forms, reveal, as plants never do, something of sensation and of locomotive power. In their higher forms, they evince indubitably a distinct consciousness. They have desires, and hopes, and fears, and they have their thoughts, their reasonings, their calculations, their plans, their successes, and their defeats. And this is but the threshold of a deeper mystery still. Mere animals have no moral nature, no conscience, no soul, no sense of right and wrong, of God, of immortality, of responsibility, and of future judgment. But men have, and are thus marvellously elevated in the scale of being. There is a mystery higher still, the loftiest and also the profoundest in the universe, the mystery of mysteries, God ! This is not mere physical life, not mere sentient life, not mere mental life, not even mere moral, spiritual life, though it includes all these ; this is not human life, not angelic life, not created life in any or all

of its forms. We are summoned to conceive, if we can, and as we can, *The* Life, the Divine, Uncreated, Eternal Life, which never began, never shall cease, and never can change—the One, only, self-derived, self-sustained, absolutely independent life ; all else being only derived and secondary. It is an awful, but also a beautiful and glorious distinction of The Great Being ! We try to think of Him before creation ! Life ! pure, perfect, indestructible Life ! uncreated, undying vitality ! a calm, deep, settled, resistless, ever-springing source of Life, needing nothing from without, rich, full, and exhaustless in Himself ! We try to think of Him, when time began ! sending out and kindling up life in ten thousand parts of His immense creation, and in ten thousand wondrous forms. All life, wherever it exists, and in whatever form, is from Him, and is sustained only by Him, His proper product, His immediate creation. He alone is *The* Life, the original, eternal, uncreated fountain and Parent of Life !

II.

But The Great Life is invisible, not only not seen, but incapable of being seen. We shall never see God, we can never see God, except as we now do, with our minds, that is, by knowledge and by faith ; but knowledge and faith are the eyes of the soul, the clearest of all eyes. Essentially, we can never be nearer to God than we are at this moment. For now and always, “ He searcheth me and knoweth me. He knoweth my downsit-ting and mine up-

rising. He understandeth my thought afar off. He compasseth my path and my lying down, and is acquainted with all my ways. He hath beset me, behind and before, and laid His hand upon me. Whither shall I go from His spirit? whither shall I flee from His presence? If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Him, but the night shineth as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike to Him." Essentially, really, no created soul can ever be nearer to God than it is at this moment, or at any other moment of its existence. But there is another and a more blessed nearness which is capable of illimitable degrees, a spiritual, a moral nearness, by knowledge, by faith, by love, by sympathy, and by real assimilation.

The first necessity, in order to this nearness, I might call it, kinship with God, is knowledge. An unknown God is far away from us, a mere blank, virtually non-existent. And in order to knowledge, there must be Divine self-manifestation. God needs to be manifested, seeks to be manifested, and has been at wondrous pains to be manifested to His creatures, in order that they might really know Him. It is written, "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." But God's hidings are revelations, and His revelations are also hidings. Always, there is far more concealed than can be made manifest, and the very concealments help us to far deeper and truer conceptions of what lies underneath, than we

could otherwise have reached. Our bodies conceal, but they also manifest, and express the souls that are within them. Everything in nature is an outcome of something which is not seen. The vegetative force in the seed struggles to appear, to manifest and externalise itself, and it ultimately succeeds in putting forth a visible form, which shall tell, in some degree, what it really is. Animal life, in its various kinds, makes the same effort and with like success, and shows by the form which it takes of what sort it is.

The Great Invisible has wondrously externalised Himself, and the visible creation may be likened to a body, of which He is the informing, living force. The immensity of creation, the vast magnitudes, the velocities and the distances, the mighty laws, the perfect regularity, harmony, sublimity, and glory; the adaptations, the bountifulness, and the beauty of the universe—all are a manifestation of what God Himself is, but a manifestation which, like every other, conceals, far more than it can reveal, and which, even by concealing, suggests far more than is made manifest. “The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood from the things that are made, even *His eternal power and Godhead.*” But this, and no more, is the extent of the manifestation. We can, and we ought, to rise: it is a shame and a crime if we do not rise from the creation to the Creator, and acknowledge and adore Him, as the Almighty Maker and Ruler of the heavens and the earth. But the manifestation, though real and glorious, is limited. The inspired Apostle limits its

extent. It reaches, he says, to "eternal power and Godhead." No less, but no more. A God, an eternal God, an Almighty God! That is all.

And this is much, very much, in itself; but it is woefully little for satisfying the deep and clamorous wants of our spiritual nature. What do we know, what can we ever know, of Omnipotence, of eternity, or of the act of creation? Nothing, next to nothing. Each of these ideas is utterly incomprehensible to us. We are able to satisfy our minds, by clear and unassailable reasoning, that there lives and must live a Being who is Almighty and eternal, and it is worse than idle to assert that we can form no sort of conception of these attributes, as real, in a real Being, for we are distinctly conscious of the contrary. But we are as distinctly conscious, that the very highest idea we are able to form ever is and ever must be immensely below the Living Reality. That which is illimitable cannot be compressed and comprehended within the limits of our or of any finite mind. We can thoroughly believe—and on grounds which are as intelligible to us as they are irresistible in themselves—that God is almighty, is eternal, and is the Creator of the universe. But if this were all we knew, God would be only and for ever uncomprehended, literally the unknown and the unknowable God.

III.

Is there, then, no Being whom we can really know as The True and Only God, and whose nature and character

we can intelligently adore, and love, and obey? Is there no other side of the Divine, except that which is incomprehensible, inconceivable? There is, but it is not discovered, except obscurely and very doubtfully, in the visible creation, and far less still in outward providence. There is a God, of whom intelligent creatures can gain a distinct and extended knowledge, and whom, therefore, they can rationally trust and love. I place myself under the guidance of the New Testament, and specially under the teaching of the Apostle John, the most beloved of all the twelve. I read the opening sentences of his first Epistle—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word (*logos*) of life (for *the* Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us). That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

The close resemblance between this passage and the first verses of John's Gospel every unbiassed reader must perceive. It is not formal, not-verbal merely, it is essential; it lies in the thought and the spirit more than in the words, and reveals the same mind and the same hand. The Gospel, written long after the Epistle, has not the same strong historical authority as the Epistle, but it is difficult—for me it is not possible—to comprehend how an unprejudiced mind can fail to see that of all the New Testament writings John's Gospel most decisively fathers itself. Who but John,

I ask myself, could by any possibility have produced such a work? The feebleness, the folly, and the gross errors which, with scarce an exception, characterize the non-canonical writers of the period, forbid such an idea. That Gospel, which is full of the words of Christ and of His prayers, the utterances of His deepest heart, in His most sacred moments, could not have been written by any one but the disciple whom Jesus loved, and whose soul, warm, strong, open, and intensely loving, had come more constantly and closely under the influence, and had drunk more deeply into the very spirit, of the Master, than any of the others. Altogether, was it not meet, that he who had lain nearest to the heart of Jesus should reveal its holiest secret and interpret its divine mystery?

The Epistle of John starts from what he emphatically calls *The Life*. And if we inquire what life, he answers, "That eternal life which was with The Father," which belonged to Him, inalienably, incommunicably. But the great subject of his letter is not *The Life*, not *The Life* in itself, but *The Life* in its manifestation, what he distinguishes as the word (the *logos*) of life, that is, the life spoken out, uttered, clothed, as ideas are clothed in words. He was verily to speak of that which was from the beginning, ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, truly eternal, but only so far as it was manifested and became that "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled."

There are aspects and attributes of God which no created

being, though he entirely believes in them, can ever compass in thought. Eternity cannot be comprehended and understood by a finite mind, and can have no similitude, no possible representation, save in another eternity. Infinity cannot be comprehended and understood by a finite mind, and can have no similitude, no possible representation, save in another infinity. Omnipotence cannot be comprehended and understood by a finite mind, and can have no similitude, no possible representation, save in another Omnipotence. So also of Omnipresence, Immutability, and other incommunicable attributes of God. In these respects the Great Father not only is, but must for ever be, the uncomprehended and the incomprehensible One. But is He to be, for ever, only and wholly unknown to His rational creatures? Are there no means of getting to the depths of His nature? to His real, living self? to His very heart? But for the stupendous fact of Incarnation the answer must have been an emphatic and awful No.

A fellow human being is known to us, usually, first of all by sight, and his person, his form, his countenance, his smile, and his eye, convey to us a kind of impression of his character. Much more is gathered when we know something of what he has done and accomplished in his day, something of his public career and course of life. But if we would really know the man thoroughly, we must go to his home and to his daily life, must examine his character, ascertain his principles, discover his aims and his spirit, and get to the deep soul and heart of him. Thus only can we believe in him

as worthy and lovable, and thus only can we come to respect and trust him. There is a Life, a Life-course, of The Eternal Father—that Life which He has eternally lived in Himself, springing out of the inner spiritual principles of His being. But eternity which has witnessed and enwrapped this blessed life-course has also veiled it from all created eyes. Oh, if the veil could but be drawn aside! If the deep, inner heart of the Eternal One could but be thrown open! It is done! The veil has been drawn aside. The very heart of The Father has been opened to its deepest depths. We now know what God really is, for Jesus Christ is God-in-man. *The Life*, the eternal life which was with the Father, *was manifested*. “We have seen it,” says John, “that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.” It was a thing, therefore, about which there could be no doubt or mistake, a thing concerning which he possessed abundant and reliable information, for which he could appeal to the testimony of his senses, and of which he was perfectly competent and entitled to judge.

IV.

The deliverance of this Apostle is unequivocal—Jesus Christ is God manifested, disclosed, made known. He declares solemnly, that *The Life*, the eternal life which was with the Father was manifested. The Invisible was rendered visible, so far as that was possible through a human medium, and the visible impersonation was placed right in front of the world, and submitted to the senses, the judg-

ment, the conscience, and the heart of men. Not the incommunicable divine attributes, for they admitted of no possible manifestation; but there are other attributes of the great Father which do admit of manifestation, and which besides are as essential, and more precious, to feeble, suffering, and withal sinful creatures. His Eternity and Infinity we can never comprehend, but we can comprehend and feel intensely when He unveils His righteousness, His purity, His wisdom, His long-suffering, His gentleness, His compassion, His boundless mercy, His love, and His forgivingness. These are not physical, but moral glories, spiritual excellences; these are the deepest and the most precious secrets of the divine nature; these are the very heart, the life of God. And this life, the Apostle declares, was manifested, and Jesus Christ was the manifestation.

Of necessity, the manifestation was human. Nothing could come so livingly and tenderly near to men, so close to their senses and their souls, to the judgment, the experience, the feelings, and the ways of men, as a man could. And Jesus Christ was a man, a true, real man, a true human body, and a true human soul, with all the ordinary faculties, susceptibilities, affections, emotions, and tendencies of humanity. Jesus was a true man among men, but He was such a man as never was seen before, and has never been seen since. The world has had its great wise men, and men also great in true goodness. God be thanked for them! The world has need of them always, has special need of them at this hour. But there is one who towers immeasurably above all human

great names—"a young man who lived on earth more than eighteen hundred years ago, and who died at thirty-three years of age ; a poor young man, in very humble life, a working carpenter, associated only with the poor, receiving no help or even countenance from the rich, the learned, or the influential, who had no intercourse with cultivated society, no access to books, no time for reading and study, no education but the commonest, and no advantages of any kind above others in the same lowly station with Himself. This young man, our Lord Jesus, in spite of all the conditions of His life, has bequeathed to the world a legacy of precious spiritual truth, such as all the sacred books of other lands and ages cannot supply—truth, besides, which has deeply and permanently influenced humanity for a thousand years, and which at this hour is acting visibly and with mighty power on the whole civilised world. But more precious still, He has left the record of a life-course which has no parallel in the annals of humanity. Never passed before the imagination of man, and never but once alighted on this earth, so wondrous, so heavenly a vision. Once, only once in human history, we meet a Being who never did an injury and never resented one done to Him, never uttered an untruth, never practised a deception, and never lost an opportunity of doing good ; generous in the midst of the selfish, upright in the midst of the dishonest, pure in the midst of the sensual, and wise in spiritual and heavenly wisdom, far above the noblest of earth's sages and seers ; loving and gentle and meek, yet immovably resolute, and whose

illimitable patience never once forsook Him in a vexatious, ungrateful, and cruel world. He went about doing good, and only good—teaching and healing, loving, blessing little children, pitying the poor and the outcast and the disowned, and comforting the afflicted and the sorrowing. Of one being in human form, and of one only, it can be affirmed that He never spoke a revengeful word and never indulged a revengeful feeling. Ingratitude, injustice, hatred pierced His soul, but His patience, His meekness, His forgivingness, and His measureless love, were never once disturbed. He bore in silence ‘the contradiction of sinners against Himself.’ He ‘was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.’ ‘When He was reviled He reviled not again, when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.’ ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,’ was the prayer with which He died. It was the inbreathing spirit of His whole life.”

Was ever man like this? Was ever such a type of a human soul and a human life even imagined. Certainly never except in this instance, was such a humanity ever described; and to have been described, it must first have been seen. This was man, true, real man; but, certainly, unless we are prepared to reject the lesson of all history and the teaching of all sound psychology, not mere man. Certainly, very God-in-man. But how? That is the question. And our only answer is, we know not how, we are unable to comprehend the fact. But Incarnation is unfairly dealt with, if it be regarded as standing alone,

for it does not stand alone. It belongs to a class of ideas which are all alike and equally incomprehensible, but which are nevertheless accepted as essential verities. Who can understand and interpret the incommunicable attributes of God, self-existence, and infinity? None. But we believe and can thoroughly satisfy our minds that He is and must be possessed of these perfections. No human being can explain Incarnation, for none can comprehend it; but its reality forces itself on our belief as the only key which unlocks an authentic history, and which without this would be utterly inexplicable and self-contradictory. And then, the unequivocal and earnest testimony of those who saw and lived with Jesus Christ, and for years were intimately associated with him, is this, that He was God manifested, so far as that was possible, through a human medium. "We have seen him," says John, "the Life," the "Eternal Life" was "manifested," and "we have seen it." "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us understanding to know The True One, and we are in The True One, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the True God and the Eternal Life." Our blessed Lord breathing out His soul to the Father said, "This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou didst send."

Jesus was the designed, prepared, and real manifestation, to men, of the invisible Father, so far as such manifestation was possible. He was a true man, a real veritable person, but He was also the medium, through which the Invisible One was to be made visible to the world. His personality

and individuality, real as they were, were to be as a framed and faithful mirror, in and through which very God was to be clearly discerned and understood. He was the visible embodiment, the faithful impersonation in humanity, and just, therefore, the real incarnation of the Father—above all, of the heart of the Father. That is to say, from what Jesus did and what He said, and what He suffered, and how He suffered it, and from all that He actually was, through His whole life-course, men were to learn, as no otherwise they could have learned, what the Great Father in Himself truly was. Eternity and Infinity could have no possible finite manifestation. But there are Divine attributes deeper and holier, and to us unspeakably more precious and essential, than these mere physical perfections. What rational creatures most of all need to know, respecting their Father, are His inner spiritual being, His real, living heart, His character, the eternal, moral principles of His nature: and these are made manifest, nowhere unequivocally and luminously, save in the Lord Jesus Christ. With some partial reservations, it may be affirmed that there is no God whose moral nature we have the means of satisfactorily knowing, and whom therefore we can enlightenedly adore, and trust, and love, except God manifested in Jesus Christ.

The material universe is silent respecting the moral character of its Creator. Moral providence is worse than silent, for it exhibits glaring anomalies and inexplicable contradictions. The false religions of the world, and all the

countless objects of religious worship set up by pagan nations, are sufficient to convince any unbiassed mind that a pure and perfect God has no place among merely human notions. The ancient Hebrew people alone—and even they with many sad departures—preserved a faith in the unity and perfection of God. In all the multitude of Grecian and Roman divinities, in the motley crowd of gods worshipped by ancient and by modern nations and throughout the whole course of the ages, there is not to be found, even one, who is the symbol of perfect moral purity, not one the symbol of patience with the disobedient, far less of tenderness and meekness, and least of all one who is the symbol of free and perfect lovingness and forgivingness. Some of the gods of the nations, ancient and modern, may be worthier, purer, kinder than others, but perfect, spiritual excellence, pure, spotless virtue has never yet been deified and worshipped by men, of their own unprompted motion. Without exception, all the gods of all nations and ages have been more or less tainted with human imperfections and with human vices and crimes. The nearest approach to the idea of Divine Perfection (which, however, owed its real origin to Revelation) was made by Mahomet. And we cannot fail to see that it is great and exalting to believe as his followers do in one Supreme, universal Will. But withal, the god of Mahomet is only another name for fatalism, a hardening and deadening fatalism, which can infuse no healthful life into any human soul, and which at best leads only to a stoical indifference or endurance.

It is not denied—on the contrary, it is most gratefully admitted—that there has been, and is, throughout humanity a secret impression of the graciousness and goodness of God. Among those who do not accept Jesus Christ, and among those who have never heard His name, the inward feeling is, and has persistently been, that somehow the Creator must be immeasurably better and kinder than any of His creatures. It may have arisen out of a primitive revelation, or it may be a native intuition of the human soul. Be this as it may, the fact is indubitable. But a mere impression, a mere feeling of the forgiving love of God, however originated, is too indefinite and too insecure to form a reliable dependence for a human soul. What is more, and worse, this vague sentiment is not only connected with, but even tends to originate, very dishonouring and very low conceptions of divine rectitude and righteousness—conceptions which are as untrue as they are pernicious. We must have something deeper and solider to rest upon than a vague inward impression; and something deeper and solider has been granted to us.

V.

First of all, God's words are more reliable than vague human impressions. To open the Holy Scriptures, which contain these words, is to place ourselves within a charmed circle, to breathe a new and gracious atmosphere, and to feel our hearts glow with the inspiring warmth of heaven. Even the Old Testament is full of the most touching repre-

sentations of the tenderness, the patience, and the mercy of God. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." "Oh, do not the abominable thing which I hate." "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Thank God, these and such-like words of the ancient revelation, together with the rites of the ancient worship, we cannot doubt, acted with holy and purifying power, not on patriarchs and prophets only, but on the masses of the Jewish people. And far beyond Judea, over all the earth, the evidence for the being and the attributes of Jehovah furnished by creation, by providence, and by the intuitions of reason and conscience, dubious and contradictory as they often seem, may have touched, more deeply and permanently than we imagine, the thought and the life of Gentile nations. But it abides true, that in all the past ages, as at this hour, men in earnest, concerning the eternal future, have ever been sore troubled and oppressed, and often driven to despair, by what they beheld without and by what they felt within. The cry in every age, as at this hour, has been, "O that I knew where I might find God, that I might come even to His seat! Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him."

If the words of divine tenderness and love in the Old Testament had stood alone, aided by the voice of reason and conscience, and with nothing to lower or modify their effect, they must have ministered mightily to the faith and hope of human souls. But they do not stand alone. On the other side, and quite as distinct and as strongly expressed, there are multiplied denunciations of sin and multiplied threatenings against evil-doers. And even in the New Testament these fall from the lips of the Saviour Himself. How can a human being, with such contradictory utterances before him, lay hold with a firm grasp on mere words of pardon? Worse than all, men are conscious within themselves of the enormity of their sin, and conscious, besides, that it deserves punishment, such as they cannot endure to think of. Words, however gracious, cannot impart fixed peace to their minds. They want a real living Being to trust in, one in whose character and nature they can place thorough reliance. If they could get near to Him who utters the words of forgiveness, if they could see into Him as He is in Himself, if they could get to His heart and soul, then, but only then, there would be a strong and sure basis on which they could depend absolutely.

This very basis has been divinely laid, and it is deep and immovable. God has found a method—all worthy and stupendous—of unveiling Himself, and of throwing wide open to men the sacreddest depths of His being. That method is by Jesus Christ. Behold the man! See in and through the man, what the God must be! Whatever

Jesus was in His heart and soul and life, that God is. All the tenderness and sweetness and beauty and patience and love of Jesus were an express unveiling of the inner spiritual nature of the great Creator. *The Life*, the eternal Life, the eternally living One, was manifested. "We have seen and heard and touched and handled the manifested Life," say apostles and disciples. Once on a time, Jesus stood beneath the bright Syrian sky, and the sky opened, and a voice from above was heard: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him." It was as if God had proclaimed, Behold Me in Him. What He is, I am, so far as through a human medium it is possible for Me to be expressed. Jesus, the righteous, pure, compassionate, forgiving, uncomplaining, crucified One is—and is designed to be—the faithful manifestation of the Eternal Father, in His deepest spiritual Being.

VL

But manifestation is not its own end, not an end in itself, but only a means to an ulterior end; otherwise it would degenerate into purposeless ostentation. Not in vain display, but on the very highest ground of necessity, God manifested Himself: for everything, as to our inner, spiritual condition, depends on the knowledge we have and the conception we form to ourselves, of God. Given, the God, you can determine with certainty what the man must be. Falsity here is falsity everywhere, and the fountain of all thought and all feeling within us is polluted. The God, whom we set up

in our thought, the idea which we form to ourselves of Him, through whatever teaching, is the standard and the test of all the real life that is in us, measures its amount and determines its quality. Hence the necessity of divine self-manifestation. If God is to be intelligently trusted and loved, He must be known and has to make Himself known. He must be spoken out, forth from the silence in which He dwells ; He must be uttered in a new and transcendent way ; He must come forth palpably, unmistakably, so that His children may all but see Him with their eyes, and hear His voice, and look on His countenance, and read His deep heart.

Men do not know and can hardly believe that God is what He is. They do not know that all evil, moral and physical, is only His abhorrence, and that all His agency in nature and in providence is directed to its extirpation. They do not know that He is pure and perfect love, as well as holiness. They do not know that He will have all men to be saved, and that He pardons human sin freely, and only delights to pardon. And just because they do not know, God has been at wondrous pains to make them know. Therefore has He stepped aside from the ordinary course of His spiritual providence, therefore has He added to the vocabulary of earth a new *Word*, of infinite meaning, and therefore has He spoken Himself out with overwhelming impressiveness, through the soul, the life, and the death of Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is never to be forgotten, that the power, the influence

which reclaims and redeems men is not physical but moral. It is not Omnipotence, not Wisdom, not even Holiness, though it be in perfect harmony with these perfections. It is love, pure, infinite love. But it is enhanced to its recipients and rendered the more invincible, because it is the love of an Almighty, an infinitely wise and an infinitely pure and spotless Being, and love withal, towards creatures, who have trampled on His laws, defied His authority, and set at nought all His entreaties and His counsels. Christian men in whom has been wrought a real inward change, a real inward life towards God, however they differ, as to dogma and as to ecclesiastical order, are beautifully at one concerning the real source and cause of their regeneration. They may have passed through many conflicts with scepticism and with secular influences, or they may not. They may have been oppressed with the sense of sin and overwhelmed with the terrors of conscience, or they may not. But all, with one heart and voice, would avow that that which touched and stirred the depths of their nature, and which at last completely subdued them, and permanently revolutionised and renovated them, was the free, pure love of God in Christ. I well know that the ages have troubled themselves to reconcile the redeeming love of God, with His righteousness, His purity, and His sovereign authority. But the growing conviction in unnumbered minds is to the effect, that the Great Being and His doings stand in no need of human theories of reconciliation, and that such theories only darken counsel by

words without knowledge. All really Christian men are thoroughly at one, in the profound conviction, that the spiritual force which lays hold of them, and which reclaims and redeems them, is the free, pure love of God in Christ. In other words, so soon as men really know God and see Him as He really is—the Holy, but the pitying and loving One—their nature is stirred and changed to its very foundations, and a new spiritual life is enkindled. It is the pure force of infinite redeeming love in the heart of God, and nothing else, which draws out the warm response of the human soul, which regenerates the inner nature, and quickens it to a new and blessed life of humble trust and pure aspiration.

Just and true conceptions of God are the salvation of the human soul, and such conceptions are conveyed through the medium of our Lord Jesus Christ. His character, His spirit, and His whole life on earth, manifested to the world, as nothing else could, how holy and righteous, but how patient, tender, sincere, forgiving, and loving God was! And then His death—being such as it was, and amidst such surroundings—revealed the unutterable atrocity of sin; but more emphatically and in more subduing tones did it proclaim that there was no sacrifice which God was not willing to make in order to pardon and save to the very uttermost, and in order to prove to His creatures that He only delighted and longed to pardon.

This is God, the true God, and the first necessity for a human soul is to know this God. Such knowledge embraced

and trusted is redemption, immediate, though incipient redemption, the beginning of peace to the conscience and of purity to the heart, the spring of all holy motives and of health and vigour to the entire spiritual nature. Let us have done with human systems of theology, which have inflicted incalculable injury on human souls, and have bewildered and tormented the Church and the world alike. Let us have done with their legal justification, satisfaction, imputation, and eternal reprobation, which have often driven men to utter despair, or created a pharisaic hard-heartedness and pride, or encouraged them in the grossest wickedness. The knowledge of God in Christ, and simple faith in Him, are salvation, are redemption, involving and ensuring peace, and pardon, and purity, and eternal life. The whole meaning and intent of Christ, of His incarnation, His life, and His death, are summed up in the words, "God manifest in flesh." Only let God be livingly manifested to His creatures, only let Him be known and accepted *as He is*, and trusted withal ! The great work is then accomplished, and a glorious and blessed consummation is secured ! Ignorance and falsity are supplanted by knowledge, and faith, and love ! Death is swallowed up of inextinguishable life ! The Holy God comes forth to His creatures, manifests Himself in Jesus, opens His heart, and unveils His tenderness and love ! This manifestation is, and is to be ever more and more, life to a dying world. It is thus the great Father saves the perishing, restores the lost, quickens the dead, forms again the broken connection with His throne, and

draws the separated soul into union with its Father. Hence the result is, as stated by the Apostle John, "our fellowship"—the fellowship of souls that have looked upon and recognised the manifested life, that have believed in, and loved the manifested God—"our fellowship truly is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

VII.

The verse from which these words are taken must be quoted entire, if we are to apprehend its full significance. "That which we have seen and heard"—namely, the eternal life manifested—"declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

I desire to feel solemnly that we are, here, in the presence of a divine mystery, which it is not possible thoroughly to solve. The doctrine of spiritual, really divine union and fellowship is before us, and the New Testament affirms the reality of several distinct modes or kinds of such fellowship. First of all, there is a union and communion between God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. "He that hath seen *me* hath seen *the Father*, and how sayest thou, then, Show us the Father?" "I am *in* the Father and the Father *in me*." "The Father that *dwelleth in me*, He doeth the works." "I and the Father *are one* that ye may know and believe that the Father is *in me* and I *in Him*." There is a union and communion between Christ and His disciples. His promise was, "Lo, I am *with*

you always, even to the end of the world." He is said to be *in* them and they *in* Him. He is the Shepherd, they are the sheep. He is the foundation, they are the stones built upon it. He is the vine, they are the branches, and are said to be rooted and grounded in Him. He is the head, they are the members of the body. He is the bread from heaven, and they feed upon Him. It is declared, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you."—There is a union and communion between Christ's disciples and God the Father. "If we walk in the light as He (God) is in the light, we have fellowship *one with another*"—God with us and we with God. "Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us." "Ye are of God, little children,"—ye belong to Him. . . . "Greater is He that is *in you* than He that is *in* the world." "If we love one another, God *dwelleth* in us." . . . "Hereby we know that we *dwell in Him* and He *in us*, because He hath given us of His Spirit." . . . "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God *dwelleth in Him* and He *in God*." . . . "He that *dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in Him.*" There is a union and communion between God the Father, Christ the Son, and all the good in heaven and on earth. "At that day ye shall know that *I am in* my Father, and *ye in me*, and I *in you*." . . . "And all mine are thine, and thine are mine." . . . "Keep through thine

own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be *one*, as *we are*" "that they all may be one as thou, Father, art *in me*, and I *in thee*, that they also may be *one in us*" "that they may be *one*, even as *we are one*." "I *in them* and thou *in me*, that they may be made perfect *in one*." "Your life is hid *with Christ in God*." "Ye also shall continue *in the Son and in the Father*."

First of all it is necessary to disabuse our minds wholly of the fatal idea of actual physical union with God, with Christ, or with one another. One responsible soul cannot be taken or drawn up and merged in another, as moisture is drawn up and absorbed in the atmosphere, or as food is taken in and assimilated by the animal system. This would be incorporation, absorption, the extinction of personality—not fellowship at all, but destructive of the fundamental idea of fellowship, which necessarily involves the notion of separate independent persons, all retaining their distinct individuality, but having thoughts and feelings and desires and aims in common. This union is wholly spiritual, mind with mind and heart with heart, in conscious, intimate, and loving fellowship and intercourse. Real, spiritual communion with any being is impossible, unless we know him and know him so thoroughly as to have got close to his mind and heart, and to have been impelled to give him our entire confidence. But is it possible thus to know God, to know Him really and intimately, and to place unlimited trust in Him? It is possible, but only through

one medium. In Jesus Christ, we see God, almost with our eyes, and can all but hear the throbbings of the infinite heart of purity and love. Really to know and to believe in God-in-Christ is, in other words, to love Him and trust Him and adore Him and give ourselves to Him, once and for ever. Thus, and only thus, is there, or can there be, a real, living fellowship between the Creator and His creatures, a real union and communion in thought, in affection, in purpose, and in deep mutual sympathies. The prodigal, on his part, felt and said, I will arise and go to my father. The father, on his part, ran and fell on his son's neck and kissed him. The two were one. There was a home again for the prodigal, and home affections, home intimacies and home joys.

It is always needful to bear in mind that on no side can we ever fully comprehend the Divine, or fully interpret divine working or divine relations. Our utmost is exhausted in comparing and contrasting the Divine with the human, and in striving to rise from the human as near to the Divine as may be possible. There are some familiar earthly facts which bear at least a remote relation to the profound conception we now strive to reach. In the first pages of this paper it was shown that life can be and is communicated, but that it cannot, even in its lowest form, be originated *ab initio* by human power and skill. Only life can beget life. There must be a living medium before other and new life can be produced. The Life, the Eternal Life which was with the Father, the inner spiritual excellences of God, were

manifested in Jesus Christ, in order that through Him they might be communicated to created souls. Christ is the medium of eternal life to this world, according to the wonderful words which once fell from His lips, "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." And hence the record is, that "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in (and by) His Son." Take another illustrative fact, of a different class. A single individual, or a number of individuals, shall be brought into frequent association with a man of superior and purer nature. He is worthy of their respect and confidence and love; they are warmly attached to him, and the attachment grows stronger, the longer they associate with him. At last they are all entirely one with him, in thought and heart, in sympathies and in aims. His convictions, his modes of thought, his views of life, and his tendencies, become consciously theirs, and theirs are really his. He is in them and they are in him and in one another. It is a true, real communion and fellowship, a deep and essential oneness.

The illustration is inadequate, and far below the grandeur of the reality, but it may help, though feebly, to render apprehensible to our minds the divine mystery of union and communion, with God, with Christ, and with all the good in heaven and on earth. The Apostle John tells us that The Life, The Eternal Life was manifested, but for a godlike purpose—manifested in order that it might be communicated, and that its likeness might be formed in created souls, so that they, in their deepest being, should be assimilated to

their Father, and be livingly, essentially, at one with Him. First of all, *The Life* was incarnated in Jesus Christ, and then from Him and through Him, as a medium,* it is communicated to men on earth, and all, in order that a holy, blessed fellowship might be formed—*God and Christ and men.*

VIII.

Thousands of years ago the question was put, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" It is impossible: they cannot walk together, or if they do, they must either be silent or they must dispute with and confute one another: there can be no communion, no fellowship. We must first be agreed with God, reconciled to what He is, to His nature as it is; we must first be agreed with Christ, reconciled to what He is, to his character and his spirit, before we can commune with the Father and the Son. We must get into the mind and heart of God and of Christ, if we would know the joy of spiritual communion! It devolves on us as a solemn duty, and it is besides our highest privilege, to pierce more and ever more deeply into the divine thoughts and the divine modes of looking on beings and things; into divine loves, and sympathies, and abhorrences, and into divine purposes, and arrangements, and agencies. It is ours, in our degree, to get into all these, and to think, and feel, and

* I hold this to be the entire sense of the doctrine of mediation. The Mediator of artificial theology, standing between an offended God and sinful creatures, is a dishonouring and unscriptural invention.

act in harmony with God and with Christ. The more we become habituated to God's thoughts and revealed mind, and to God's purposes, and laws, and will, the more that we make these our own, so much the more, and no otherwise, do we enter into fellowship, ay, and union with the Divine. We have, then, many things—and these the deepest of all—in common with the Father and the Son. God's thoughts become, in measure, our thoughts, God's will becomes our will, God's estimate of things, of the temporal and the eternal, of life and of death, of the earthly course, of poverty and wealth, of obscurity and honour, and of real excellence of character, becomes our estimate. Blessed consummation ! Is it a fiction or a reality ? This at least is certain. It can only be the result of earnest and patient self-effort and self-conflict, of long and deep intimacy with the divine and the eternal, of a settled habit of constantly realizing and communing with God, of consciously subjecting our minds to the eye of God, of really living in His sight, and referring everything to His standard, and asking our hearts, constantly asking, "What would my Father, my Saviour, do or think in this instance ? what would my Father, my Saviour, have me do and think ?"

Have I touched if but the verge of the great mystery ? Is this, feebly described as it is, something like fellowship with the Divine, real union and communion with God ? Incomparably blessed is that human soul, who knows by experience, if even in a limited degree, this kinship with the Father, with the Son, and with the Holy Spirit proceeding

from both. Be it ours to penetrate into the divine mystery ! With no pharisaic isolation from the healthful and joyous humanities, for which God hath formed us, may we deeply believe and feel that our real, inner, blessed life is in God and from God, and that our closest and most endeared association is with Him. All our thinking must be in subjection to His thought and mind. All our sympathies must be on His side, for that is the side of purity, truth, and love, and emphatically the side of man. All our desires and aims must be placed beneath His eye, and must await His sanction. Our will must be surrendered without reserve to His will. He must for ever be supreme in our heart, and soul, and life. Thus striving and praying that God may be all in all in us, shall we not be drawn more and ever more into real union with the very nature and spirit of God, as manifested in Jesus Christ ?

But this union and communion involve and insure increasing likeness to Christ. There can be no real union between things, and much more between minds, that are essentially dissimilar. We have seen that the immediate end of manifestation was to make God known to His creatures. But He is made known in order that they may be transformed into His likeness, and the real, ultimate end of manifestation is assimilation. "We all, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed"—it is a fact, an experience, a process, through which we pass—"into the same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall

see Him as He is." A luminous object, a sun, not only dispels darkness, but diffuses and communicates *itself* to all around. It throws out and imparts its light to every object within its range, and makes all luminous like itself.

The presence of Christ, even in His low estate on earth, had a wonderful purifying and assimilating power on human souls. And now, though He be absent to sight and present only to memory and to faith—even now, to be near to Christ and to God in Christ, near in thought, in faith, and in intense affection, what is it but to take on the divine likeness, and to grow into the Divine Spirit, in order that the process of divine assimilation may be most surely advanced and deepened. And if it be so even now, how far mightier and vaster must not the assimilating power be, when Jesus shall be seen unveiled and without a cloud, and when His glory, full disclosed, shall envelope and actually penetrate our natures! The great end of God, through Christ, is to make His children like their Father, and to create not a nominal or a judicial, but a real living fellowship—the sons of God proving their parentage by a strong and undoubted family likeness—not by merely bearing an honoured name, but by possessing the mind, and heart, and spirit of their Father.

But the condition of created souls, however pure and good, is necessarily one of gradual progress. It must be so, hereafter as well as here. On earth, the advances of even the best of men, in truth, and purity, and love, in likeness to God and to Christ, are miserably slow, uncertain,

and insecure. We ought to be and are required to be growing up, in all things, to Him who is the Head. The mind which was in Him should be also in us. His calm trust and His habitual realisation of His Father, His purity, His love to men, His sympathy with the afflicted and sorrowing, His care for the poor and the outcast, and the ungodly, and the wicked, should be ours ; but they are not, save in the feeblest measure. But this and nothing less is involved in the idea of true communion with God and Christ. This and nothing less it is, to have Christ formed in us the hope of glory. For this and nothing less *The Life* was manifested, that it might enter into us, and transform us into the very likeness of our Father and our Saviour—gradually, indeed, but surely and efficiently.

Not a few Christian people have imagined, and still do, that death will make up all human deficiencies, and that the sudden transition into the eternal world will produce a change, amounting virtually to perfection. It would be unwise and presumptuous to pronounce upon what is involved in the change from time to eternity, for we have next to no revealed information concerning it. Some things, and but a few, are plain enough and can hardly be questioned. For example, death shall certainly sever us from a vast multitude of temptations and snares which belong only to our worldly condition. And then, leaving our bodies in the grave, we shall be effectually saved from those sins and crimes which originate in our animal nature. On the other hand, the presence of Jesus the Redeemer suggests an inconceivable

power for good, which shall at once act on our nature. "To depart," in the Apostle Paul's judgment, was, in other words, "to be with Christ." The idea is full of illimitable strength and hope to the departed and the departing. And then the whole of the new circumstances and privileges of the future world, the light, the power, the purity, the moral transparency, and the new associations and friendships, human and angelic—all present an amount of sacred influence which cannot be estimated. But with all this present to thought, it remains as impossible as ever to conceive that a mere momentary change of place can effect an entire and radical transformation of a human soul. We cannot in a moment, as if by a sudden jerk, be thrown into spiritual perfection. It is impossible, and would be a contradiction to all the known and fixed laws of the human mind.

In this connection there is a passage of Scripture, often sadly misapplied, which deserves some attention,—“In the place where the tree falleth, there shall it lie.” Certainly, unquestionably. The tree cannot change its position, and unless some force, some agency, not its own, be employed, it must lie where it fell and as it fell. But this proverbial saying has been translated into other language and weighted with another meaning, and is supposed to convey that “as death leaves a human being, so judgment will find him.” And this, also, is true, perfectly true, but not at all in the sense which is often intended. When the tree falls, its exact condition as to internal health and vigour, or as to decay and

decomposition, must be that which belonged to it before it fell. And in like manner what a man really is, in character, in soul, at death, that, exactly, will he be seen to be, when he passes into the future state of existence. That is to say, the mere change of place, the mere moment of death can effect no change in his actual character. Just as he is, really, essentially, when he dies, will he, must he, appear in the presence of his God. But then, be he what he may, shall he not amidst new and wondrous circumstances, amidst associations and influences of incalculable power, under the eye of the Great Living Redeemer, re-enter on a process of holy discipline, and recommence an unending progress in purity, and truth, and love?

Perfection belongs to God alone. No creature can ever reach so high that higher shall be impossible. The human soul shall be ever advancing. That is its destiny. Never perfect, it shall be for ever acquiring new excellences, shall become more and more assimilated to the Father, and shall rise to closer, nearer union and fellowship with Him and with the Redeemer. More and ever more the thoughts of God and His ways of thinking shall become consciously ours. More and ever more the Manifested Life shall be communicated and transfused into us and shall shine out from us. The character, the spirit, the very mind and heart of Jesus shall be increasingly reflected from us. Progress, endless progress, must be for creatures the law of eternity, and this instead of lessening, shall insure and deepen its blessedness.

IX.

But if the words of the Apostle lead us up to the eternal state, they refer, in the first instance, to a condition of things which is realised on earth. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is"—is now at this moment—"with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." God and Christ and regenerate human souls in intimate, indissoluble union and communion! This is the wondrous fellowship, and it is realised here on earth, and at this moment. It is no pretence, no nominal distinction, no fancy, no invention, no creation of weak enthusiasm or of morbid piety. It is a simple, solid reality. It is expressed in clear unambiguous words, and we must altogether disown this Apostle's authority if we question the fact which he here asserts, that on this earth there is a real union and communion between God and Christ and all good souls. But how shall we ascertain that it is true—a fact distinguishable in the existing world? Most certainly it is not a visible fact, discoverable by the evidence of the senses. There is not on earth a Christian Church, so-called, which includes the whole multitude of true Christians, and no others than true Christians, and which palpably enjoys, and alone enjoys, fellowship with the Father and the Son. There is no society or sect, large or small, which does or can do this. We have no possible means, no infallible outward test, by which we can determine the interior being of our fellow-

creatures, or even of a single individual. In the very worst and most corrupted of so-called churches we can and do believe that vast multitudes of the very best of men are to be found, and in the purest and most scriptural of so-called Christian churches, some of the very worst of men have found or feigned their home. Where then is this holy fellowship, this union and communion with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, which the Apostle declares to be actual? Amidst the gods many and lords many, amidst the idolatries and the vices of heathen nations, and amidst the churches, and the sects, and the endless divisions and hostilities of Christendom, where shall we discover it?

But it is real and actual, notwithstanding, unless this Apostle has uttered an untruth. No human, no created being can draw the line which shall circumscribe it accurately, including all whom the Omniscient Judge would pronounce genuine, and excluding not one whom He would accept and admit. By no creed, no confession, no articles, no standard, no test of human device, could we separate the truly good and godly from the rest of mankind and form them into a visible Church. There were churches without number in the apostolic age, in cities, in districts, in countries, some of them good, but others bad in doctrine and in life. John does not here connect himself by name with any of the churches; though he cared for them all, he seems to attach little or no value to outward local association. Real relation to Christ is everything, relation to so-called churches may be a very small matter, and it may

be even worse than nothing. No account shall here be made of the Roman, the Greek, the Armenian, or any other churches, of the Papal, the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Congregational, the Methodist, or the Quaker ideas and forms. They have all some things in common, some more and some less good, and others more and others less bad, but none of them is *the* Church of Christ. No. But, if I understand the Apostle aright, there is within and among them all, an undiscerned, living brotherhood, multitudes innumerable, who have recognised God in Jesus Christ, who have cast themselves in true penitence and faith at the foot of the Cross, and are already in real fellowship with the Father and the Son, and are longing fervently for truer subjection, deeper inward assimilation, more loving obedience, and more conscious union and communion with the Divine.

They constitute an actual, living fellowship, though no eye but God's can detect its outline and its limits. They are separated from one another by country, by language, by social position, by mental characteristics and, worse still, by churches and creeds. In great part, they are wholly unknown to one another, and of those who have mutual knowledge, some, were they to put their convictions into words, would express them very differently from others. But the God with whom they have to do, through all their differences discerns an essential unity. The eye of The Holy One, amidst whatever seeming diversity and even hostility, finds a beautiful harmony in their deepest soul, in their

thoughts and feelings towards Himself and towards the Divine Redeemer, and beholds the effect of His Spirit's influence in their sense of crucified love, in their efforts and their prayers, to be wholly surrendered to the divine will, and in their intense desire for nearer fellowship and union with the Father and the Son. Far separated as they are and personally unknown, they are essentially one, one in one another, and one in God and His Christ.

Nor is the triumph of the Redeemer to be restricted to the souls whom He hath effectually won by His love, and who joyfully own His sway. By no means. The literature and the civil and social movements of the last half century give intelligible token of a power which is divine rather than human. That genial, tender, and humanising tone which has distinguished and is distinguishing some of the best and most influential of the writers and the public men of the day, that heedful thought for the poor, the outcast, the abandoned, and for widows and orphans and destitute children, that crusade against the vicious idea of caste, and that wide-spread impulse to draw all ranks and classes of men into more loving union—where shall we find their true source if not in the divine spirit of Christ and Christianity? This is not indeed formally and universally admitted. In many quarters it is strenuously contested. Humanity, itself alone, is credited with originating the loftier, juster, and kinder ideas, which it has accepted. It must be credited with accepting these ideas, but their first discovery and announcement are to be found only in the New Testament.

Age after age the announcement has been repeated, and not in vain, but the ear of the world was long dull, and the heart of the world was long hard. At last a real impression has been produced, and Christian ideas and sentiments are adopted by multitudes who do not acknowledge or even know their origin. After all the education and the discipline and the influences of a thousand ages, God and His Christ have succeeded in coming nearer to the mind and heart of the world. The holy precepts of the gospel, the wise and righteous principles of God's moral government, have descended and are descending into many minds, and many imperishable divine thoughts and much of a divine spirit are sinking into and taking root in the soil of earth. An assimilating process is advancing far beyond Christian churches and Christian sects. In the general world, men's ideas and ways of thinking, their sentiments and their feelings, in many various directions, are becoming more humane and more divine. In spite of much that is disheartening and disastrous at this very hour, the heavenly leaven is slowly but surely assimilating the mass. Christian sentiments and ideas and feelings are surely, though gradually, taking possession of the world. The manifested Life is touching and vitalizing humanity at many points. Ere long the effects will reveal their cause, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, will at last be recognised and loved as "God manifest in flesh."

But if the incarnation of Christ and the manifestation, through His soul, His life, and His cross, of the mind and

heart of God has been and is yet to be an almighty, redeeming power on this earth, shall that power be without effect in the eternal world? It is poor and impoverishing to admit the thought. We do not exalt, but miserably dishonour God's great work of redemption, by the belief that it belongs solely to the present state. Can any open mind imagine that the Great Being has no farther power and no other and stronger means of reclaiming His children than those which are put forth during this earthly life? Can any one believe that, having done His very utmost on earth and failed, there is nothing left for Him but to withdraw and confess Himself defeated? Perish the dishonouring conception!

The future state, little as is revealed concerning it, even we can perceive, must possess inconceivably more numerous and more efficient redemptive powers than the present world. To overlook everything else and to take only a single agency, what must it be for men and evil spirits to look on the Saviour and to see in Him the manifested Life of God? Think of the multitudes in Christian lands who while on earth, through the circumstances of their condition, or through deep aversion, or through mere indifference, had never known more than the name of Jesus—if even that. Think of the myriads of teeming generations in heathen lands, for ages and ages, who had never even heard the name of Jesus. What shall it be, what must it be when they come near to the purity and the love and the pity depicted in the countenance and glowing in the heart of the Son of Man? Is it conceivable, or possible, that no

irresistible redemptive and purifying force should issue forth to lay hold of their nature? To me, at least, ~~this~~ is not conceivable and not possible.

Those who have sinned against light, against conscience, and against love, those who have perversely chosen evil and deliberately rejected God, must lay up for themselves a terrible doom of self-condemnation and remorse, of longer or shorter duration, as the case may be, and must carry within them the poison of conscious guilt. But nothing can permanently withstand the Infinite Pity of The Father and the overwhelming manifestation of Incarnate Love. The most obdurate shall be won at last. For Jesus is ordained to reconcile and restore all things to God, "whether they be things on earth or things in heaven." "Then cometh the end when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father and when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, **THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL!**"





